CHAPTER FOUR

THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

4.1 Introduction

The preceding problem analysis leads to the strategy. It involves the vision, guiding principles, strategic and specific objectives. The objectives are formulated according to the identified ecosystems. Opportunities for the strategy and action plan are included.

4.2 Cameroon's vision

Box 4.1
Cameroon's vision on biodiversity

A country that:

- **exploits or rationally utilises her natural biological resources sustainably to meet the development needs and the well-being of her population,**
- **preserves its ecosystem balance, and**
- **hands down the richness of her biodiversity to future generations.**

4.3 Guiding principles

In order to reach this vision, our biodiversity strategy and action plan as well as their implementation will be guided by the principles in Box 4.2 essentially drawn from the CBD and Agenda 21.

4.4 Strategic goals

The overall goal of the NBSAP is to implement the three objectives of the CBD:

- conservation of biological diversity,
- sustainable use of its components, and
- fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources. It is also in fulfilment of the decisions of the Conference of Parties.

An analysis of both the proximate and underlying causes of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation in Cameroon (as shown in chapter III) led to the adoption of the following strategic goals:

Strategic goal 1:

Reduce and/or stop biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation in the short and medium term, and reverse the current trend of ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, in the long term, through environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable biodiversity management systems.

Strategic goal 2:

Promote known values of biodiversity and its components (short term) and assess unknown values so as to raise awareness of biodiversity importance, derive incentives and enhance awareness so that all stakeholders can pledge more commitment to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and its components.

Strategic goal 3:

Develop and/or strengthen capacity for planning, implementation and monitoring of biodiversity programmes and projects at all levels of the society, particularly, at the local community level.

Strategic goal 4:

Adapt legislation to include CBD requirement.

Strategic goal 5:

Promote the development of project proposals and fund raising.

Box 4.2
Guiding principles to the Conservation of Biodiversity

4.2.1. Concerns for conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components are to be integrated in all Cameroon's decision-making systems including the introduction of environmental impact assessment procedures, taking into account that socio-economic development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities in decision-making (see Article 14 and the Preamble of the CBD)

4.2.2. Biodiversity and programmes are best planned and implemented using:

- a holistic approach which integrates socio-economic, cultural and environmental considerations, taking into account the three levels of biological organisation i.e. genomes and genes; species and communities; and ecosystems, habitats and landscapes. The ecosystem is the primary framework of actions to be taken (SBSTTA Recommendation 1/3 in UNEP/CBD/COP/2/5, and based on Principle 4 in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development);
- a participatory approach involving representatives of all groups of stakeholders, in particular the local communities with emphasis on women and the youth who play a central role in the management of components of biodiversity (See Principles 10 and 20 in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development);
- the precautionary approach should be taken so that lack of full scientific certainty is not used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent loss of biodiversity or ecosystem degradation (Rio Principle 15 in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the CBD preamble);

4.2.3. Biodiversity plans and programmes have to be consistent with existing national plans, laws and other policies previously adopted in response to the Convention on Biological Diversity. They should also take into account relevant provisions of other regional and international agreements and conventions ratified by the country Article 22 of the CBD on «Relationship with other international Conventions»). As much as possible the country will endeavour to implement biodiversity-related conventions and agreements in a coherent and cost effective manner.

4.2.4. Conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components in Cameroon have impact on regional and global biodiversity. Therefore, international technical and scientific co-operation is to be promoted as part of the implementation of the NBSAP(Article 18 of the CBD)

4.5 Specific objectives

From the detailed studies of biodiversity status and trends in and the identification of the specific problems responsible for the decline in biodiversity in chapter III, the following objectives, specific to the various ecosystems, are considered as strategic to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Cameroon:

4.5.1 Marine and Coastal Ecosystem:

Box 4.3
Specific Objectives in Biodiversity Conservation

- To ensure cleaner production processes by mining companies, agro- industries and other polluters;
- To promote activities that ensure the sustainable exploitation of biological resources.
- To integrate these objectives with relevant articles of the UNCLOS.
- To ensure that environmental protection norms are respected during development of infrastructures and plantations;
- To ensure the conservation of biologically important and sensitive habitat taking into account their representativity;
- To promote traditional knowledge for the use and value of marine and coastal ecosystem biodiversity and its components;
- To reduce man made pollution of marine and coastal ecosystem;
- To promote biodiversity prospecting;

4.5.2 Tropical Humid Dense Forest Ecosystem:

Box 4.4
Specific Objectives in Biodiversity Conservation

- To promote sustainable management and exploitation of tropical dense forest and resources.
- To build, develop and strengthen capacity at all levels of the sustainable management and the protection of forest ecosystems.
- To promote traditional knowledge of forest and biodiversity and its socio-economic importance.
- To Promote biodiversity prospecting.
- To ensure proper care of forests and improve knowledge on the value of forests and the dynamics of the ecosystem;
- To ensure the delimitation of forest reserves so as to check occupation of forest reserves for extra non-forestry activities;
- To institute measures against activities and practices likely to produce uncontrollable forest fires;
- To ensure the adoption of better farming techniques by the population and to provide alternatives to forest resources such as fuel wood and building materials so as to reduce pressure on forests for daily subsistence;
- To ensure the conservation of the representativity of the forest ecosystem.

4.5.3 Tropical Wooded Savannah Ecosystem:

Box 4.5
Specific Objectives in Biodiversity Conservation

- To minimise ecosystem degradation through the promotion of sustainable agro-pastoral techniques;
- To promote sustainable harvesting of timber, fuel wood and wildlife resources and other biological resources;
- To institute measures against activities and practices likely to produce uncontrollable bush fires;
- To improve knowledge of biological resources and their socio-economic importance;
- To improve the facilities for biodiversity conservation;
- To minimise impact of exotic species/breeds on local environment and identify indigenous species/breeds that are equivalents.
- To create conditions that reduce farmer-grazier conflicts.

4.5.4 Semi-arid Ecosystem:

Box 4.6
Specific Objectives in Biodiversity Conservation

- To combat desertification and drought by halting deforestation and ensuring sustainable management of water resources;
- To ensure provision of sufficient conservation structures;
- To improve knowledge of biological resources and their socio-economic importance;
- To institute measures against activities and practices likely to produce uncontrollable bush fires;
- To prevent farmer-grazier conflicts and halt ecosystem degradation by ensuring promotion of sustainable agro-pastoral techniques;
- To ensure sustainable harvesting of fuel wood and fauna.

4.5.5 Montane Ecosystem:

Box 4.7
Specific Objectives in Biodiversity Conservation

- To check deficient management of the montane ecosystem through planned occupation of lands, training of specialists and law enforcement;
- To check degradation of the ecosystem and deforestation through sustainable exploitation of forest and floral resources;
- To ensure adequate management of the ecosystem's zones of influence (ecotouristic potential, available resources and their dynamics)
- Improve knowledge on the available resources and their dynamics;
- To institute measures against activities and practices likely to produce uncontrollable bush fires;
- To ensure the promotion of appropriate agro-pastoral techniques.

4.5.6 Freshwater Ecosystem:

Box 4.8
Specific Objectives in Biodiversity Conservation

- To promote sustainable exploitation of biological resources components;
- To promote measures and practices in industry and among local population to minimise polutioo of water;
- To develop appropriate measures to reduce actions that render the ecosystem fragile;
- To increase knowledge of fresh water biological resources and their value for beneficial exploitation

4.6 Opportunities for the NBSAP

While nations recognise the merits of the Conservation of Biological Diversity, the degree of success in implementation of the Convention's articles, particularly with respect to the strategies and actions in the NBSAP, would depend very much on what ground work had been carried out *a priori*. Cameroon , before the CBD had consciously taken measures in the direction of biodiversity conservation. The Convention came to consolidate, as it were, the gains of past efforts and give them focus. The following, therefore, is a discussion of the past achievements and current activities being undertaken by the government, and other stake-holders that provide the opportunities for the success of the actions put in place in this plan for the protection, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Box 4.9
Opportunities for the NBSAP

- Past achievements in protection and conservation of biodiversity;
- Past achievements in the equitable sharing of the benefits and costs of biodiversity;
- Academic institutions for widening the scientific bases;
- Enabling environment;
- Ratification of CBD and biodiversity related conventions.

(i) Past achievements in protection and conservation of biodiversity

Since independence, Cameroon has had three Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Laws. The first was Ordinance N^{0} 73/18 of 22 May 1973 and its decree of application (with respect to forestry) N^{0} 74/357 of 17 August 1974. This ordinance was abrogated and replaced by N^{0} 81/13 of November 1981 and its decree of application N^{0} 83/969 of 12 April 1983. This law was also found inadequate in addressing the problems its promulgation had intended to

solve and so was subjected to review. The debates for the conception of a new forestry policy in Cameroon started with the analysis of the forestry sector effected within the framework of the Cameroon Tropical Forest Action Plan, whose final working document was approved by the government in 1988. These debates continued after 1992 in order to take into account the resolutions of Rio and the conventions relating to the forest sector. The new forestry, wildlife and fisheries law, an outcome of these debates, came into being in 1994 (Law N° 94/01 of 20 January, 1994) and was followed by its decree of application N° 95/531 of August 1995.

Cameroon's forestry policy is a reflection of the preoccupation of the Cameroon society vis-à-vis the conservation of nature as well as new concepts established at the international level in matters of development and the environment. It is part of the national strategy on the encouragement of economic activity in the rural milieu and hence supports the agricultural policy. The involvement of the rural populations in the implementation of the new forestry policy, notably by ownership of community forests, is an innovation intended to motivate these people to better protect the vegetation cover. Hence actions envisioned in the NBSAP with respect to forestry are easier to implement in the situation where the people have a stake.

For sustainability of the fisheries resources, measures had been taken to ensure that:

1. fishing zones are properly demarcated;
2. authorised and appropriate fishing methods are employed;
3. appropriate equipment is used during exploitation;
4. there is controlled access to the fishing grounds which are dominated by foreigners .

In the agricultural domain, research had shown that sustainable utilisation of the various plant species/varieties requires not only that the related agro-ecologies stay intact/balanced but it also requires containment and correction of problems of loss of genetic variability environmental/disease stress, extinction, low productivity and utilisation when the need arises. This presupposes conservatory methods of utilisation of desired species and varieties and conservation/preservation of rejected ones. However, much remains to be done in the area of collection, characterisation and evaluation. Where some work has been attempted, variability is abundant. Conservation is essentially *ex situ* for cultivated species (Mbah, 1997).

With regards to plant genetic resources, some crops show a wide variability as indicated by their presence in all or most of the agro-ecological zones (i.e. maize, beans, groundnuts, millet/sorghum in the drier zones). Within each research programme of the former IRA, a genetic improvement component sought always for higher yielding varieties resistant to diseases and pests while satisfying consumer demand. Once the desired varietal objective was achieved, multiplication and dissemination were set in motion. Adoption of improved varieties eliminate the «nondescript» varieties, which may still possess some merit that is needed to satisfy future exigencies. The target was, and still remains, to collect, conserve, evaluate and classify all animal and plant varieties.

Past studies on the abundance and distribution of species by agro-ecological zones showed that the «environment (habitat) selects the genotype». Cattle dominate meat production with about 61% while small ruminants, poultry, and pigs contribute about 14%, 13%, and about 11%, respectively. Among cattle, the *Bos taurus* has extinct, endangered and threatened breeds. Efforts are on to protect and conserve the threatened breeds. For small ruminants an indigenous breed, the Black Belly sheep is endangered. No characterisation has been carried out or even started on pigs, poultry and «minor species» (Mbah 1997).

Cameroon has a wildlife that is vast in variety and quantity. This has been given ample description in chapter II. For their conservation and sustainable use, they are found in protected areas: national parks, wildlife reserves, synergetic zones, zoological gardens, wildlife sanctuaries, game ranches, buffer zones and farmlands belonging to the State. The protected area rises to about 4,750.000 ha making 10% of the territory (Djoh, 1997). For none protected areas, threatened and endangered species (e.g. forest elephants in the Mt. Cameroon region) are protected by appropriate texts (e.g. CITES).

All the above efforts, viz. plant and animal research, creation of wildlife sanctuaries, and zoological gardens dovetail with the NBSAP objective of wanting to ensure improvement of the knowledge of bioresources and also the improvement of facilities and techniques for manipulation of genetic material.

(ii) Past achievements in the equitable sharing of benefits and costs of biodiversity

Cameroon has made several efforts in the past, and currently has some programmes that have directly or indirectly ensured the equitable sharing of the benefits of biodiversity.

Historically, the official situation, especially in rural Cameroon, consisted in the collection and use of bioresources by populations. Sometimes the livelihood sustainability of these populations was officially «backed up» by some specialised public services in several domains like agricultural extension (with SODECAO, CENADEC, UCCAO), agricultural credit (FONADER), input supply (for SODECAO, NPMB) and agricultural marketing (Office Cerealier, NPMB, OCB). Two of these official services could serve as examples (Kamanda, 1994):

Firstly, the National Produce Marketing Board (NPMB) was created from the defunct «Office National de Commercialisation des Produits Agricoles d'Exportation» in September 1976. The NPMB had the assigned mission to eradicate the effects of uncontrolled vagaries in the prices of basic agricultural products of the Cameroonian peasantry. As of the official texts, this Board was to perform the following specific functions:

- maintain constant sale prices for farmers' main agricultural crops;
- organise and control the flow of these products in the international markets;
- carry out research in order to develop and implement new measures to improve the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of produce; and
- supervise agricultural extension by improving working conditions of farmers through the refurbishment and creation of farm to market roads.

Secondly, the National Fund for Rural Development (FONADER) was created in 1973 by Ordinance N^{0} 7324 of May 1973 with the role to:

- provide management of the funds provided to farmers by the state or local and external funding agencies (in this matter, FONADER funded agriculture, livestock, fish farming, agro-forestry, artisanal activities, improvement in habitat, the provision of motorcycles to farmers);
- provide agricultural credit (FONADER implemented projects in various areas such as village water supplies and offered credit) to young farmers;
- provide security for loans obtained from banks by services working for the benefit of the rural sector; and
- provide funding in collaboration with other banks in favour of rural development.

Farmers confirmed having received the following service from public utilities several times, especially in the 1970s and 1980s:

- Fungicides, pesticides, farming tools and agricultural credit;
- Scholarships for their school children as well as bonuses for themselves; and
- Construction and repair of farm-to-market roads in their areas, (confirming state or official support to sustaining livelihoods in the rural areas).

Equitable sharing of the benefits of wildlife biodiversity has been attempted:

SPORT HUNTING: The economic benefits accruing from sport hunting can be estimated from: issue of licenses and permits, taxes on kills, taxes on allocation of hunting zones, taxes on issue of firearms, stamp duty, veterinary taxes, sales of artisanal products derived from games, salaries paid to employees in the wildlife sector, commercial value of meat from sports hunting and consumed locally.

CAPTURE: The economic benefits of the exploitation of wildlife from game viewing can be estimated on the basis of access fees into the national parks, rental of lodging infrastructure catering; transport, purchase of souvenirs, salaries of guides, photography permits.

ECOTOURISM: The economic value from the exploitation of wild life from ecotourism can have as indicators: number of visitors, expenditure on tourists (transport, lodging, catering, and leisure).

These efforts have not been success stories. Current government efforts in the forestry, agricultural, livestock and environment sectors, *inter alia*, implicating stake-holders are aimed at improving benefit sharing.

(iii) Academic institutions: widening of scientific bases

The recent reorganisation of the Cameroon university system in 1993 saw the splitting of the University of Yaounde into the University of Yaounde I and University of Yaounde II. This was with a view to decongesting the original university so as to improve teaching and

research. In that reorganisation wave, the university Centres of Buea, Ngaoundere and Dschang were upgraded from their specialist status to full-fledged university institutions offering all the possible courses in the arts and sciences. This was followed by the reorganisation of the research institutes (IRA and IRZV to create IRAD). The merger was to ensure efficiency in the utilisation of human and material resources and hence ensure improved research in terms of quality and extent. These changes gave rise to emphasis on research and course work (IRAD, University Dschang and Mbalmayo Foerestry school) Through the assistance of the Ministry of Higher Education, the Universities of Yaounde I and Yaounde II and IRAD were connected to the Internet, the information super highway through which current information on scientific research anywhere in the world can be accessed instantly. The Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research is also connected to Internet.

(iv) Enabling environment

The several commissions and international committees have demonstrated political support for conservation of biodiversity and sustainability. There are commissions and committees that work in an advisory manner on issues related to the protection of the environment and biodiversity conservation and management as observed in box 2.10.

Cameroon signed the *Jakarta Ministerial Statement* on the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the 14th and 15th November 1995.

The National Environment Management Plan (NEMP): At the national level, a new environmental management plan has just been put in place and the instrument of application is awaited. The NEMP is one of the major responses of Cameroon to the resolutions of the 1992 Rio Earth summit. It is the framework of the Cameroon government's general policy on the protection and management of the environment and biological diversity. At the local level, provisions have been made for the implementation of all the laws and actions. However, technical management and financial capacities at the local level are inadequate to enable effective participation .

Environmental Legislation: Within the framework of the NEMP, the Cameroon government has taken a number of legislative measures such as the new forestry, wildlife and

fisheries law to ensure the protection and sustainable management of the environment and biological diversity. These include The Framework Law on the Environment. This law outlines, in a general way, the manner and direction in which other laws on the environment will follow. It provides, *inter alia,* for the International Commission for the Environment (ICE), the National Consultative Council for the Environment and Sustainable Development (NCCESD), the Forestry Fund, the Wildlife Fund. This is the first legislation that introduces strict environmental requirements in which there is provision for compulsory Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) before any development project can be carried out. However, this can only come into application when its many instruments of application are prepared by the competent ministries and signed by the President of the Republic or the Prime Minister. The law provides for standards, permits and protocol measures (in instruments of application) to take care of biodiversity and environmental issues.

Mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing legislation: Mechanisms for measuring and enforcing legislative and regulatory enactments on the environment are inadequate in some cases. However, efforts are being made to put such efforts into place, but this may only start materialising when the decrees of application of the environmental law become available.

Greening operations: To check depletion of forests and vegetation, efforts are being made to encourage the planting of trees all over the country. This has been especially important in the semi-arid zone where "Operation Green Sahel" meant to reforest the provinces located in the sahelian zone was started. The operation is jointly carried out by the Government, NGOs, international organisations and local communities. Greening operations are also taking place in the savannah zone of the country. These operations have legal and regulatory backing from the Environmental Law, the Forestry, Fisheries and Wildlife Law, the National Environmental Management Plan (NEMP) and the National Forestry Action Plan.

Fiscal instruments: Taxes on the exploitation of forests and fisheries resources and mining are calculated by the competent ministries and enacted by parliament through the yearly finance law. These taxes are for quantities of resources exploited and not for environmental degradation caused by these activities. However, the Forestry Law and the Framework Law, this time, make provisions for special taxes for forest regeneration and development through a Forest Development Fund, still to be operational.

International co-operation: To achieve some of the objectives of biodiversity protection as elaborated in the actions in this plan, Cameroon will have to count on the expertise of the developed countries, particularly in technology development and/or transfer, within the framework of technical co-operation agreements. The need for co-operation is clearly stated in the CBD (Art. 5 and 18) and affirmed by the *Jakarta Ministerial Statement*. A summit of Central African Heads of State held in Yaounde in March, 1999, produced the Yaounde declaration on the sustainable management of tropical forests. Co-operation will provide the complementary assistance that will be needed as an additional element to ensure the success of the actions elaborated in the plan.

Personnel training for biodiversity conservation: Personnel, in this case, refers to those who understand the underlying issues in the diversity of the ecosystem(s) and who are equipped with the training to analyse the problems and offer solutions. Cameroon has made some strides in the training of personnel in her numerous specialised schools, research centres, and the universities. This conforms with Art. 12 of the CBD. Cameroon has a forestry school in Mbalmayo, a wildlife school in Garoua. Fishery is offered as an option in the «Centre National de Formation Zootechnique et Vétérinaire» in Foumban.

At the informal level, such training has been carried out essentially through seminars, workshops, short training courses, at home and abroad, with funding coming from the government, NGOs and external agencies.

Given the huge expanse of Cameroon's forests (spread in almost all ecological zones and the major habitats of the majority of Cameroon's flora and fauna), the number of personnel trained is inadequate to meet the demand of protection, conservation, evaluation and monitoring. The fact that wildlife is not subject to the constraints of international boundaries, and the fact that wildlife policies may be different across international boundaries sharing the same ecosystem over wide areas require that more specialised personnel be available for monitoring, evaluation and protection. The current expansion of intake into these specialised schools, the reorganisation of universities and the multiplication of refresher courses, seminars and workshops for workers involved in these services will increase the numbers and improve the quality of existing staff.

Research: Agricultural research had been carried out on a limited basis and objectives by the various colonial powers (Germany, Britain and France). Reorientation of national science and technology policies in the interest of the nation started after independence in 1960 and it is still evolving institutionally and otherwise.

With the creation of «IRA» and «IRZVP» in 1974, agricultural research moved from «cash» crops to «food» crops as well. «Major» species/varieties/breeds of agricultural importance were included on the research agenda of genetic improvement. «Minor» species/breeds and wild relatives have been neglected. Nevertheless, there are *ex-situ* and *in-situ* conservation effort on the various research stations, botanical and zoological gardens.

The Institute of Animal and Veterinary Research started work on the threatened breeds (Kapsiki, Namchi, and Black Belly) but lack of funding stopped the effort. With the exception of Kapsiki, these are trypanotolerant breeds. The envisaged increased funding in the newly created IRAD will improve research and save the collection on the stations in Yagoua and Nkolbisson. The increased funding also means expansion of research to other areas, previously neglected for want of funds.

Forestry research had been very old in Cameroon and dates back to 1948, when a section on research was created and attached to the then Department of Forestry and Wildlife. It was taken over in 1964 by the «Centre Technique Forestier Tropical» (CTFT), a French State Centre which, in turn, created seven research stations. In 1975, the Institute for Forestry Research and Fisheries (IRAF of ONAREST) and the Centre for Forestry Research (CFR of IRA) at Nkolbisson were created. Some activities in environment and biodiversity research are carried out by the IRAD, and Natural Resources Management Projects such as the Mount Cameroon Project, Korup Project, Southern Bakundu Project, TROPENBOS-Cameroon, and international organisations such as WWF, WCS, Living Earth, Birdlife and IUCN.

Fisheries research has been under the control of MINREST (IRAD) through the «Centre de Recherches Halieutiques et Océanographiques» in Limbe (CRHOL) and its stations at Kribi and Foumban. The main research was on the following:

- Knowledge of the totality of aquatic and fish resources potential in Cameroon;
- Studies on the improvement of traditional fishing techniques;
- Rational exploitation of aquatic resources; and
- Improved management of aquatic resources.

Improved management: Measures are being put in place for efficient management of forest resources, to encourage the integration of complementary activities, to co-ordinate the measures and those that apply to other sectors in order to ensure rational exploitation and to

minimise conflicts in the utilisation of the woody resources. The result envisaged is the optimal management of the woody resources and other forest products. The participation of the population in the management of forests would ensure a better protection of the forest cover and increase revenue for all the interested parties. Other measures in view to ensure forest regeneration involve establishing a permanent demand/supply adjustment in forest products in order to satisfy the needs by maintaining the capital. To attain this objective, it is fundamental to ensure forest regeneration/reforestation by associating the population. Similar measures are being taken to ensure proper management of biodiversity in other ecosystems.

With respect to wildlife, management is regulated by Law N^{0} 94/001 of January 1994 listing forest estates, wildlife and fisheries with its decree of application N^{0} 95/466/PM of July 1995. Numerous orders with a view to completing the basic texts are in the process of preparation.

Public participation: Participation of the populations in environmental issues has been provided for by the Framework Law on the Environment. Section 72 states that: "Populations shall be encouraged to participate in environmental management, especially through free access to environmental information, pending the imperatives of national defence and state security, consultative mechanism to take stock of the opinions and contributions of the populations, representation of population within environmental advisory bodies, production of environmental information, sensitisation, training, research and education on the environment". Provisions for participation also exist in the Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Laws.

Sec. 72 (para. 2) of the Framework Law on the Environment provides for consultative mechanism to take stock of the opinions and contributions of the populations in matters of the environment. This is in contrast to the old Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Law where no provisions for participation of the public in the management and utilisation of biological diversity was provided for. With the coming of the new Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Law of 1994, the local population can now take part in the management and exploitation of biological diversity through «Community forestry». The DFID of British Technical Aid through the Community Forestry Project has assisted the MINEF prepare a manual to facilitate the implementation of community forest attribution and development in Cameroon.

Policies addressing poverty and equity: The NEMP considers poverty as the main cause of environmental degradation in Cameroon. The CBD does same for developing nations.

The root cause for unsustainable exploitation of biodiversity resources by the local communities to meet their needs can be attributed, to a greater extent, to poverty.

Non-governmental Organisations: Both local and international NGOs have been playing roles in environmental management. They have been the main spokespersons for local communities. The Framework Law makes provisions for NGO participation. They are also involved in activities of mediation with local populations, the public and private sectors and the civil society as well as information, training and research. The NGOs involve the local communities in biodiversity management and train and educate them on their role and rights within legal provisions. WWF, Living Earth, and other international NGOs have tended to promote demonstration projects in environmental education and conservation.

Measures directed at disadvantaged groups: Studies have been carried out on the role of women on environmental and biodiversity management. The involvement of women is at two levels: the public sector and the private sector.

(v) Ratification and implementation of CBD and CBD-related Conventions

Cameroon has signed and ratified several treaties (Box 2.10) and has proceeded to implement them with legislation. For example, the Convention to Combat Desertification whose objective is to fight desertification particularly in Africa, (Article 7) is being implemented through the desertification combat by the following measures:

1. Creation of a Provincial Desertification Combat Committee in the Far North Province (before the ratification of the Convention);
2. Organisation of sensitisation seminars on desertification with the assistance of the UN;
3. Implementation of several projects in the sahel region destined to combat desertification (Waza-Logone Project) with assistance of IUCN and WWF; Mission for the Integrated Development of Mount Mandara (MIDIMA); SOS Louti, and implementation of water projects in sahel regions both by Government and some NGOs.

In its efforts to implement the provisions of Article 11 of the CBD, the government has provided for the attribution of Community Forests to village communities which so desire. Through an agreement within the community forests, the villagers are allowed to manage and exploit all the resources within those perimeters according to a management plan. They are provided the technical assistance in the management of community forests by the administration

charged with forestry. This is in addition to the «User right or Customary rights» recognised and granted to riparian populations who have the right to exploit for personal use all resources except protected species in accordance with Section 8 (1) of the law N^{0} 94/01 of 20th January 1994 on forestry, wildlife and fisheries.

Furthermore, the Clearing House Mechanism instituted by the Convention has provided another area for bilateral co-operation and, presently, GTZ is assisting Cameroon to enable the country to be linked to the Secretariat of the CBD. In the field of information exchange, the transfer of this important Internet technology to keep the country abreast with information exchange and sharing (Article 17 of the CBD), is the main objective of the GTZ Cameroon co-operation in the domain.

Cameroon lacks a policy in the development and use of biotechnology. In conformity with the implementation of articles 8(g) and 19 of CBD, the GoC has been actively involved in international negotiations leading to the establishment of a protocol regulating the safety of transboundary movement of living modified organisms (LMOs)/genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The UNEP International Technical Guidelines for Safety in Biotechnology (in whose elaboration Cameroon participated) have constituted a basis for the development of a national policy which will have, as an outcome, a legal framework while awaiting the completion of the current international negotiations on a biosafety protocol. The UNEP guidelines are considered in the country as an international soft law which will assist Cameroon to prepare national capacities to develop, assess and manage biotechnology, the establishment of adequate information systems and the development of human resources. A regional workshop held in Limbe, Cameroon, from 9 to 11 August, 1999, produced a final draft of the Cameroon Biosafety Law.

The government has got multilateral and bilateral co-operation to exploit the UNEP International Technical Guidelines in the development of national biosafety guidelines and there are prospects of benefiting from the funding of donor agencies. There are prospects of funding from UNEP and the Government of United States of America.

Box 4.10
Treaties Relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity

	Date of Ratification or Adherence
• Convention on Biological Diversity;	R 19.10.94
• Convention for Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Ecosystem;	R
• Environment of the West and Central African Region Marine and Coastal Ecosystem;	R
• International Convention for the Conservation of the Atlantic Tunas Marine;	R 20.02.89
• Convention concerning Safety in the use of Asbestos;	R
• International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Flora;	R
• The Lome Convention;	R 19.10.94
• The Framework Convention on Climate Change;	R 29.05.97
• The Convention to Combat Desertification;	R 27.07.64
• Kano Convention on African Migratory Locusts;	R 30.08.89
• The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer;	R. 14.05.84
• The Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage;	R 25.06.96
• (Compenhagen) The Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the Ozone layer;	R 08.06.92
• (London) The Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the Ozone layer;	R 30.08.89
• The Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the Ozone layer;	R 29.10.78
• Treaty banning nuclear weapon test in the Atmosphere in outer space and under water;	R 29.09.78
• African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural resources;	R 14.05.84
• International Convention relating to intervention on the High Seas in case of oil pollution casualties;	R 14.05.84
• International Convention on Civil Responsibility for Damages due to oil pollution;	R 12.08.84
• International Convention on the Establishment of an International fund for Compensation for oil pollution Damage as amended;	R 05.06.81
• Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);	R 07.09.81
• Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wildlife;	R 19.11.85
• The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);	R
• UNESCO Convention on Man and the Biosphere (MAB 1971) and World Heritage;	R 07.03.83
• Convention concerning the protection of world cultural and natural patrimony;	R 02.03.77
• The Bangui Convention relating to the creation of an African Intellectual Property Organisation;	R 19.11.85
• The International Tropical Timber Agreement;	R 07.12.82
• Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage;	R 19.11.85
• African Timber Organisation Agreement;	A 14.10.94
• United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa;	A 25.09.87
• Convention on Assistance in the case of A Nuclear Accident or Radiological emergency;	R
• The Non-Binding Principles on the Sustainable Management of Forests.	