



Libreville International Conference
2-3 June 2010
“Bolstering biodiversity in Africa: everyone’s problem and heritage”

Coinciding with the International Year of Biodiversity, 2-3 June 2010 the Gabonese Republic is hosting an international conference in Libreville (Gabon) on the issue of safeguarding biological resources in Africa. The conference will be attended by government and state leaders, ministers, scientific experts, private companies, representatives of international organisations and figures from general society.

The Libreville conference has been organised in partnership with the United Nations Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and will focus on a core issue underlying global concerns, namely “Bolstering biodiversity in Africa: everyone’s problem and heritage”.

Gabon, an integral part of Africa’s lungs

The Congo Basin, which covers Gabon, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, is the world’s second largest area of natural tropical rain forests behind the Amazon region.

The Congo Basin forest alone accounts for nearly 200 million hectares or 30% of the plant cover on the African continent and 19% of the world’s tropical rain forests.

Furthermore, under the presidency of His Excellency Omar Bongo Ondimba, Gabon has implemented a policy to preserve natural areas by setting up a chain of 13 national parks protecting nearly 11% of the country’s forest and water regions.

An international concern

At a time when safeguarding biodiversity in Africa is becoming a major issue for everyone, the Gabonese Republic is hosting a conference that will contribute to the international debate on the link between protecting biodiversity and economic growth. How can we exploit biological diversity, an asset for the future just like mineral and energy resources, on a sustainable basis without damaging it? What do we have to do to ensure success?

The Libreville conference will launch the debate on boosting awareness by promoting the introduction of a committee of the pan-African IPBES, the scientific Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services – the equivalent of the IPCC on climate. In addition to participating in the celebrations for the International Year of Biodiversity (United Nations resolution no. 61/203), the Libreville conference will also cover the planned agenda of the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which will be held in October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan.

Institutional partner:

* **Convention on Biological Diversity:** the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty adopted during the Rio de Janeiro 1992 Earth Summit that has three objectives: preserving biological diversity; using it sustainably; and sharing the benefits arising from exploitation of genetic resources on a fair and equitable basis.

Technical and scientific partners:

* **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN):** The IUCN is the largest global network for protecting the environment, comprising over 1,000 member organisations from 160 countries including 200 governments and 800 NGOs, as well as close to 11,000 voluntary scientists and experts from around 160 countries.

* **Gabon parks:** A chain of 13 national parks protecting nearly 11% of the country's land and water area.

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