



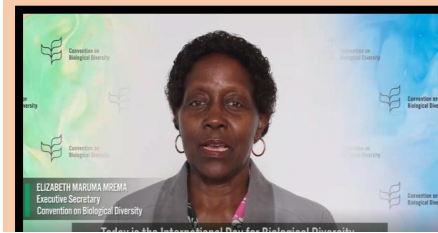
REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, PROTECTION OF NATURE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



2022 INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY CELEBRATIONS IN CAMEROON

THEME: “Building a shared future for all life”



REPORT ON THE CELEBRATION ACTIVITIES



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I. INTRODUCTION

By proclaiming May 22 as the International Day for Biological Diversity, the United Nations has taken the option to continuously raise awareness about the value and importance of biodiversity for human well-being. Adopted in 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the main platform that shapes the global agenda for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as the equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

Cameroon, Party to the CBD, has always joined the international community to celebrate the International Day of Biodiversity (IDB). The celebration of this day calls on everyone to take action to reverse the growing trend of biodiversity loss, a challenge that must be met in accordance with the country's development vision defined in its National Development Strategy 2020-2030. Aware of its role as a custodian of biodiversity and in recognition of the cardinal role of biodiversity as an answer to several sustainable development challenges, ecosystem-based approach to address climate change, health issues, food and water security, and sustainable livelihoods, and that biodiversity is the foundation on which we can build back better, the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, under the auspices of His Excellency Mr. HELE Pierre, organized a series of activities to commemorate this year's celebration. The celebration brought together key partner sector ministries and stakeholders working on biodiversity, as well as representatives from key development and productive sectors, research institutions, NGOs, CSOs, IPLCs, youths, women, students, media and technical and financial partner organizations.

II. THEME AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CELEBRATION

The theme of this year's celebration "***Building a shared future for all life***" was born out of the desire to "build on the momentum generated in 2020 and 2021 to support the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted at the upcoming UN Conference on Biodiversity (COP 15)". The slogan is action-oriented and is set in the context of the ongoing UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, which highlights biodiversity as the answer to several sustainable development challenges.

The main objective of this year's celebration was to join the International Community in raising the awareness of the important role biodiversity plays in human wellbeing and to pave the way for national engagement in the process of defining key elements to be considered in the national framework for biodiversity beyond 2020. More specifically it was aimed at:

- Raising awareness on the need for a profound change in behavior regarding the management of biodiversity for a positive nature;
- Bringing the public opinion to understand the drivers of biodiversity loss and the way forward for a sustainable future;
- Presenting the main findings and key messages from Cameroon's National Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Assessment (NBESA) to sector administrations and key stakeholders, in a perspective of advocating for an effective mainstreaming of biodiversity in sector strategies and the National Development Strategy 2020-2030.

In order to achieve the year's celebration objectives, a series of activities were organized nationwide, both at the centralized and decentralized services. These activities carried out between the 16th-30th May 2022 included awareness-raising through inter-school environmental club competitions (using quizzes, poems, rhymes, and paintings), a high-level webinar on the presentation of the main findings from Cameroon's NBESA, an exhibition of biodiversity-related activities carried out by various technical and financial partners within the national territory and a gastronomic exhibition by women groups from the different regions of Cameroon.

III. PARTICIPANTS

The celebration brought together key partner sector ministries and stakeholders working on biodiversity, as well as representatives from key development and productive sectors, research institutions, NGOs, CSOs, IPLCs, youths, women groups, students, media and technical and financial partner organizations. It is worth noting that at the central level, this year's celebration was earmarked by the finals of the inter-school challenge which took place on the 23rd May 2022 and the celebration day proper which took place on the 30th May 2022.

IV. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

1) Monday 23rd May 2022

One of the main activities of the 2022 IDB celebration in Cameroon was the finals of the inter-school challenge which took place of Monday, 23rd May 2022. Under the supervision of the Divisional Delegate of Environment, Protection of Nature and sustainable Development of the Mefou and Afamba Division of the Centre Region, a series of competitions (quizzes, poems, songs and paintings) were carried out between educational establishments and environmental youth Clubs related to the theme of this year's celebrations in prelude to the celebrations day proper as depicted in pictures 1 below.



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

Picture 1 (a, b, c and d): Finalists of the 2022 Biodiversity Inter-School Challenge

2) Monday 30th May 2022

2.1. Highlights of the activities of the celebration day proper

The celebration day proper of the 2022 IDB in Cameroon took place of Monday 30th May 2022. This celebration took place at the Yaoundé Conference Center and was articulated around four main activities:

- A High-Level Webinar on the presentation of the main findings from Cameroon’s NBESA;
- Key note addresses from the CBD Executive Secretary and the Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development;
- Prize award to winners of the 2022 biodiversity inter-school challenge;
- Visit to exhibition stands.

2.1.1. PART 1: High-Level Webinar

The high-level webinar was marked by a high-level panel constituting of four (04) Cabinet Ministers amongst which we had the Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development (webinar host), the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, the Minister of Water Resources and Energy and the Minister of Livestock, Fisheries, and Animal Industries (see pictures 2 a, b, c, d and e below).

The webinar also saw the participation of the representatives of UNDP BES-NET and UNEP WCMC, the CO-Chair and Coordinating Authors of Cameroon’s NBESA, representatives of UNDP-Cameroon, UNIDO-Cameroon, WWF-Cameroon, IUCN-Cameroon, GIZ-COMIFAC, NESDA-CA, Regional and Divisional Delegates of the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, Sub-Regional and National Civil Society Organizations, Youth and Women groups, IPLCs, and the private sector.

The key point on the agenda of the webinar was the communication of the main findings and key messages from Cameroon’s National Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Assessment.

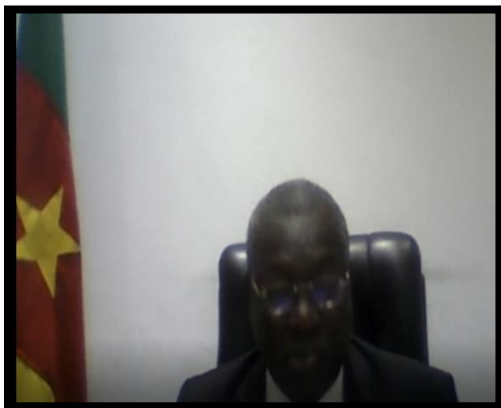
WEBINAR – SENIOR PANELISTS



(a) Mr. HELE Pierre (Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development)



(b) Mr. Jules Doret NDONGO
(Minister of Forestry and Wildlife)



(c) Dr. TAÏGA
(Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries)



(d) Mr. Gaston ELOUNDOU ESSOMBA
(Minister of Water Resources and Energy)

WEBINAR-MODERATOR



(e) Mrs. BEYALA Josephine Therese epse ELOUNDOU
National Focal Point to the Convention on Biological Diversity

Picture 2 (a, b, c, d and e): *High-Level webinar panelists*

The webinar was opened with an official opening speech from the Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, Mr. HELE Pierre. In his address, he welcomed and thanked all the participants for honoring his invitation which to him is a sign of their engagement in participating in the fight to halt the progressive decline of biodiversity observed both at the national and international level. He went further to thank the team of experts who participated in the process of elaboration of Cameroon's NBESA with emphasis on the importance of the assessment and the role it shall play in facilitating decision making. He continued his word by highlighting the fact that Cameroon's NBESA is compiled in six (06) chapters and a summary for policy makers with 23 key messages derived from 08 major findings as follows:

- The information mobilized from scientific and traditional knowledge is essential to policy development and decision-making processes;
- The representativeness of the ecosystems, the abundance and diversity of species and the flow of ecosystem services make Cameroon "Africa in miniature";
- The benefits of Cameroon's rich biodiversity that should help reduce poverty and improve the well-being of the population remain under-exploited;
- The rich ecosystem and species diversity is being increasingly lost. The goods and services derived from it have consequently declined over the last three decades;
- The loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services and their impacts on human well-being result from a combination of anthropogenic and natural factors;
- Given development projections, Cameroon's unique biodiversity and ecosystem services will continue to decline in all ecosystems by 2050, which could compromise their contribution to human well-being;
- Strengthening the governance of biodiversity and ecosystem services is a key option for the implementation of the national development strategy;
- Cameroon has opportunities and options to capitalized on so as to fill the gaps of financing that could improve the contributions of biodiversity to growth and human wellbeing.

The honorable Minister ended his opening speech by acknowledging the invaluable work done during the five (05) years of the NBESA process in Cameroon and precised that the organized webinar will be an opportunity for Cameroon not only to showcase to the international and science community, the best practices that could be extracted for its NBESA experience but also to engagement national actors and stakeholders in actively mainstreaming biodiversity in their various strategies and sectors of activities.

2.1.1.1. Presentation of Cameroon's NBESA

After the opening speech from the Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, the moderator of the webinar, Mrs. Eloundou Josephine introduced the webinar by giving a brief overview of the presentations to be made and the technical modalities of the consequent question and answer session.

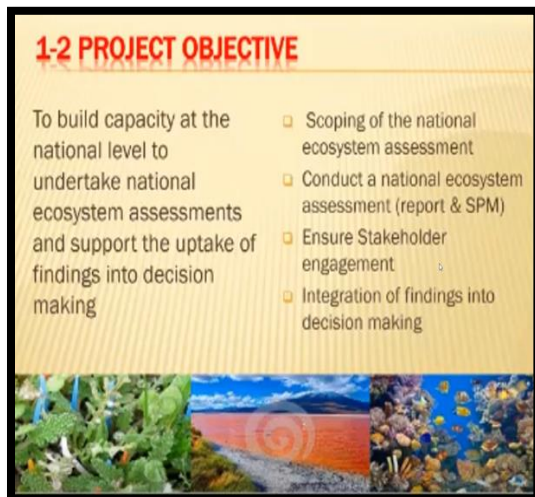
❖ The first presentation was done by Madam Prudence Galega, Co-Chair of Cameroon's NBESA, who gave an overview of the assessment process (see picture 3 below). She began her presentation by thanking the Minister of Environment for initiation the assessment process which started way back in 2017 and also appreciated the organization for the minute of silence which was observed in memory of her colleague Co-Chair Dr. HIOL HIOL who passed away months ago.



Picture 3: Justice Prudence GALEGA, Co-Chair of Cameroon's NBESA during her presentation

She continued her presentation by highlighting the assessment rationale/objectives, key policy issues addressed, the guidelines of the assessment process and the actors involved (including institutions, authors and collaborators). The need for the assessment she said, came as a result of a paradigm shift of the global and national processes, led by the demand for a science-policy interface to be able to communicate and generate viable information on biodiversity. This demand for a science-policy

interface led process was replicated within Cameroon's National Platform for Science-Policy Interface on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which using the IPBES process model, approved four main objectives for the assessment project which were:

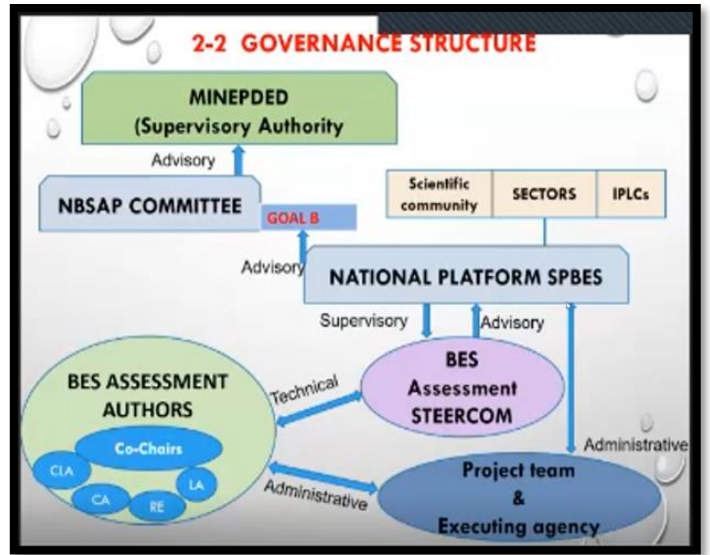


- To scope the assessment information in order to decide what Cameroon's priorities were;
- To conduct the assessment itself;
- To bring along and around the process, a multi-sectoral group ensuring that the findings constitute viable information on biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- To integrate findings in decision making processes.

Picture 4: Objectives of Cameroon's NBESA project

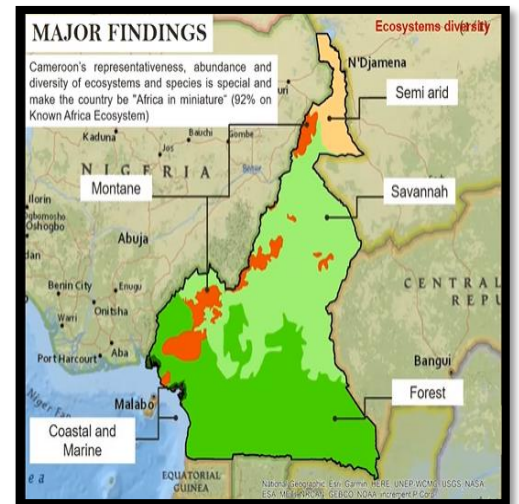
The Co-Chair further disclosed that within the Cameroon component of the project, the Ministry of Environment was the supervisory authority and the executing agency was NESDA-CA, with a host of partners that came on board. Due to the need for a buy in at the national level, a wide consultation was carried out with the ultimate setting up of a project governance structure to manage the project.

Justice Galega in concluding her presentation underscored the fact that the methodology used in Cameroon's NBESA was an adaptation of the IPBES Conceptual Framework that was contextualized with respect to Cameroon's governance realities and structure. To her, such an adaptation of the IPBES Conceptual Framework can now serve as a key recommendation and best practice for all those conducting assessments. She further acknowledged the important role played by the task force that was put in place by the Ministry of Environment and was charged of ensuring and supervising the finalization of Cameroon's NBESA.

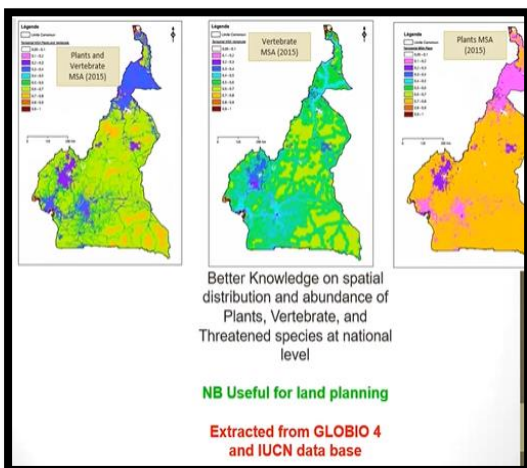


Picture 5: Cameroon NBESA's governance structure

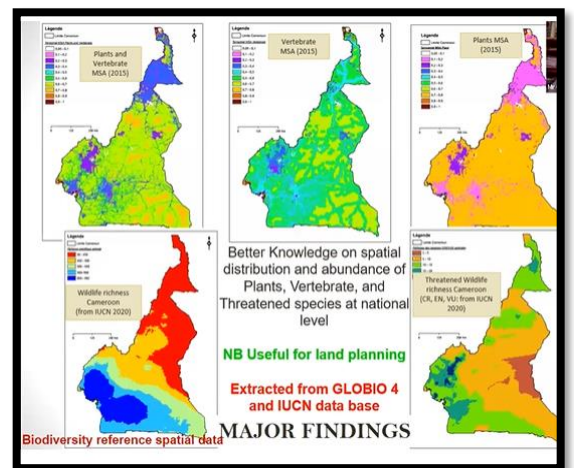
❖ The second presentation on the Key findings from Cameroon's NBESA was delivered by Mr. John Gounes, Inspector N°1 in Cameroon's Ministry of Environment and Coordinating Lead Author of chapter 5 of the assessment on Scenarios for biodiversity and ecosystem services towards human well-being. In a scientific and succinct manner Mr. Gounes in his presentation highlighted Cameroon's Peoples and relation to biodiversity and ecosystem services (BES), Cameroon's development orientation and the BES Contextualized framework. He revealed the main findings under ecosystems diversity, biodiversity hot spots and reference spatial data and data updates as well as trends and main drivers of BES change in Cameroon. He further disclosed the findings in response to biodiversity erosion and BES contribution to wellbeing (see pictures 6 a, b and c).



(a)



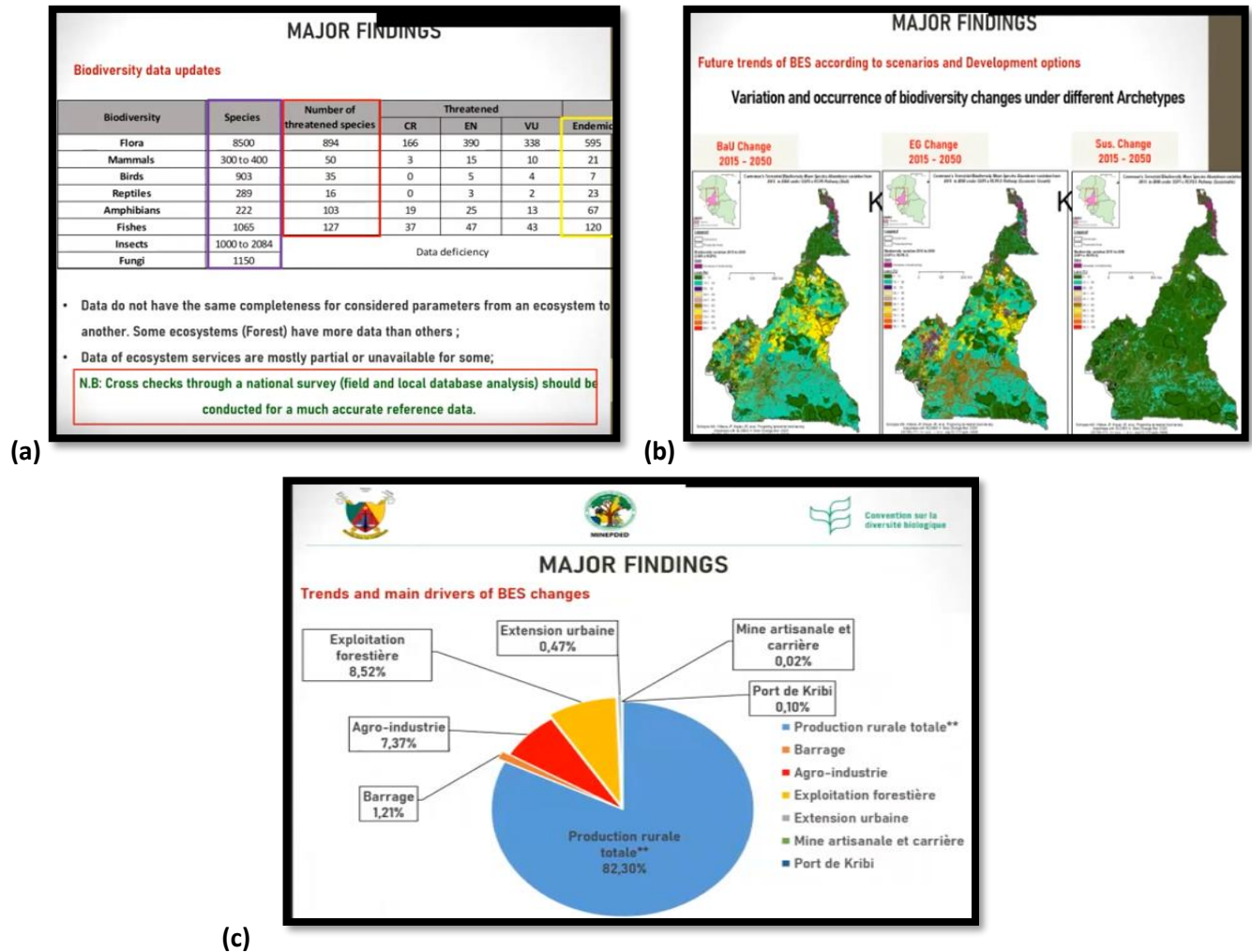
(b)



(c)

Picture 6 (a, b and c): Cameroon's peoples and relation to BES

On Cameroon's peoples and BES, the orator presented statistics from 2020 which revealed that the population of Cameroon is about 26,545,863 people, with a projected 33.766 121 in 2030. The growing urban population he added is between 55 to 57% with 39.9% of persons living under the poverty level. He identified agriculture, livestock breeding, forest logging, fisheries and aquaculture as the major BES drivers of change related to economic development and the productive sectors. He pin-pointed four principal functions ascribed to BES in Cameroon notably provisional, regulatory, support and cultural Inspector Gounes further presented major biodiversity data susceptible to ameliorating the current biodiversity updates for Cameroon (see pictures 7 a, b and c).

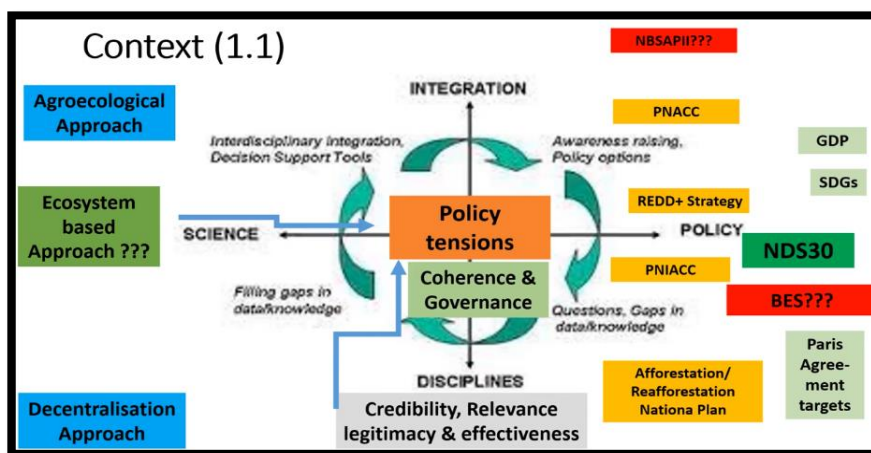


Picture 7 (a, b and c): Major drivers of BES change and future trends in BES according to development scenarios

Mr. Gounes ended his presentation by highlighting some views as to how useful such knowledge on BES could be in the decision-making processes in Cameroon. The identified gaps he said portrayed the way forward to consolidate the science-policy interface, stressing the need for action to be taken for biodiversity based on the findings related to the future trends of BES provided by the scenarios and development options.

❖ At the heels of Inspector Gounes' presentation was a presentation on the Policy Impact of Cameroon's NBESA. This presentation was done Professor William Mala who delved at length on the strengths of the assessment, focusing principally on its link to policy and decision making. Professor

Mala's presentation plan had four main articulations: the context; approach; findings and conclusive remarks. Contextually speaking, Prof.Mala emphasized that the paradigm of science – policy that emerged some fifteen years ago, or thereabout, was introduced by emerging countries which have had veritable economic and social transformations from their natural resources and potentials. Cameroon has also taken suite after this pattern as reflected in its National Development strategy 2020-2030 (NDS30). He added that this developmental perspective or trajectory has to take into consideration many other contributory strategies including the biodiversity perspective, especially in the phase of the current decentralization process going on in Cameroon. The orator reiterated the fact that the greatest challenge of the NDS30 is the taking on board the biodiversity component of development. Using pictorial diagrams, he made clear the connections between SCIENCE, POLICY, INTERGRATION and BIODIVERSITY, sorting out and explaining the interdependence of the variables that influence this interface in the current decentralization plan of the government (see picture 8 below).



Picture 8: Integration of science-policy interface for BES in Cameroon's current development pattern

❖ The last presentation of the webinar was made by the National CBD and IPBES Focal Point Mrs. Eloundou Josephine, who presented the Impact of Cameroon's NBESA: the achievements, key lessons learned as well as the key messages of the maiden assessment. The principal presentations she made unraveled the following major findings and associated key messages:

Findings 1:

The information mobilized from scientific and traditional knowledge is essential to policy development and decision-making processes.

Key Message 1.1

Scientific knowledge provides qualitative and quantitative information on biodiversity and ecosystem services for inclusive and integrated sectoral policy-making and informed decision-making in development processes.

Key Message 1.2

Traditional knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services constitutes an important information base in the fields of pharmacopoeia, food, culture, research, resilience, etc., which can be used in various sectors.

Findings 2:

The representativeness of the ecosystems, the abundance and diversity of species and the flow of ecosystem services make Cameroon "Africa in miniature".

Key Message 2.1

Cameroon has 92% of the ecosystem types in Africa. In terms of flora, the country has the fourth highest floristic diversity in Africa and the second largest forest area in the Congo basin

Key Message 2.2

Cameroon achieved significant progress in the conservation of its biodiversity which is illustrated by the creation of 02 marine and 103 terrestrial protected areas, all representing 22 % of its national territory, a surface area far beyond the 17 % fixed in Aichi Target 11.

Key Message 2.3

The diversity of Cameroon's ecosystems provides a stream of provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural services that are highly interdependent.

Findings 3:

The benefits of Cameroon's rich biodiversity that should help reduce poverty and improve the well-being of the population remain under-exploited.

Key Message 3.1

The monetary and non-monetary benefits of BES are diverse and can make a significant contribution to household economies and have enormous potential for growth in the development sectors that depend on them.

Key Message 3.2

The economic potential and non-use values of supporting and regulating ecosystem services remain undervalued and under-exploited.

Findings 4:

The rich ecosystem and species diversity is being increasingly lost. The goods and services derived from it have consequently declined over the last three decades

Key Message 4.1

Cameroon is home to the largest number (61%) of endangered and critically endangered fauna and flora species in the Guinean forests of West Africa.

Key Message 4.2

The vegetation cover in Cameroon has been declining over the last two decades.

Findings 5:

The loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services and their impacts on human well-being result from a combination of anthropogenic and natural factors.

Key Message 5.1

Climate change and other natural hazards are accelerating the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Key Message 5.2

Land degradation affects provisioning, regulating and supporting services.

Key Message 5.3

The decline in the area and integrity of Cameroon's ecosystems is the result of the effect of anthropogenic drivers of BES erosion.

Key Message 5.4

The impacts of the combined effects of climate change and anthropogenic activities significantly affect human well-being.

Findings 6:

Given development projections, Cameroon's unique biodiversity and ecosystem services will continue to decline in all ecosystems by 2050, which could compromise their contribution to human well-being.

Key Message 6.1

Whatever the scenarios and models of BES evolution for each development option, a loss of at least 20% of biodiversity abundance is inevitable by 2050.

Key Message 6.2

Cameroon's strategic development directions will have a significant impact on the well-being of indigenous peoples and local communities whose livelihoods are intrinsically dependent on BES, in a context where rurality will remain at least 30-35% by 2030.

Key Message 6.3

Robust and integrated spatial planning of development, sustainable production and consumption of food and energy, and effective implementation of environmental conservation measures are three (03) key options to reconcile the conservation of BES with the country's development needs and increase their contribution to the well-being of the people by 2030.

Findings 7:

Strengthening the governance of biodiversity and ecosystem services is a key option for the implementation of the national development strategy

Key Message 7.1

Notwithstanding the richness of the governance architecture of the BES, the operationalization of the governance tools developed in Cameroon over the last three decades remains a challenge

Key Message 7.2

Elements of governance such as policies and laws, institutions and coordination mechanisms, public participation, transparency and accountability, devolution and co-management, equity in access and benefit sharing, and financing are factors that can influence the sustainable management of BES.

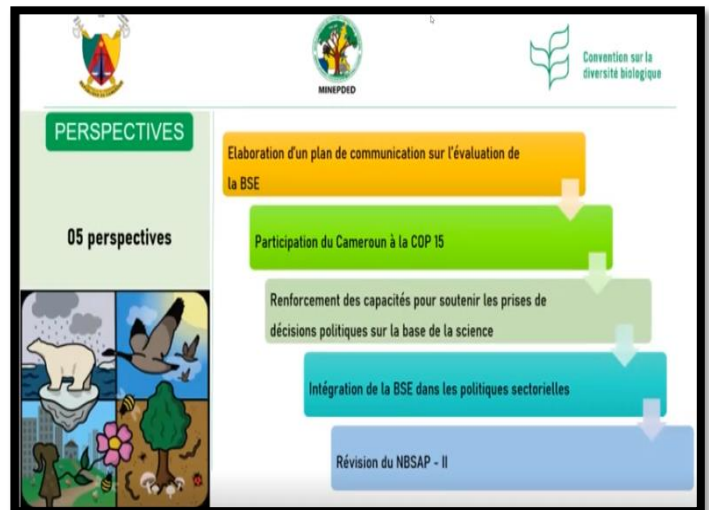
Key Message 7.3

The integration of BES into the strategic options of the NDS30 is a major challenge for resilient sectoral growth and the establishment of a new paradigm of sustainable economic development and contribution to human well-being.

Findings 8:

Cameroon has opportunities and options to be capitalized on to fill the gaps of financing that could improve the contributions of Biodiversity to growth and human wellbeing.

After the presentation of the major findings and associated key messages from Cameroon's NBESA, Mrs. Eloundou continued by highlighting the short-term perspectives (picture 9). In this regard, she spoke of the need to urgently elaborate a communication plan for the vulgarization of the outcomes of assessment in order to reach out to policy makers for whom the SPMs and its keep messages have been duly prepared. She equally underlined the importance for capitalizing on the results of the assessment in supporting Cameroon's position in the respective negotiations for the adoption of the much-awaited Global Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.



Picture 9: Short-term perspectives after Cameroon's NBESA

In concluding her presentation, Mrs. Eloundou identified the knowledge and data gaps from the assessment as well as the appropriate capacity building needs to support science-based decision making reiterating the need to intensify such capacity building initiatives. She further underscored the need to integrate BES in sector policies and to need to revise the Cameroon's current NBSAP II.

2.1.1.2. Interventions by Other Members of Government

The coordinator of the webinar and National Focal Point to the CBD, Mrs. Eloundou Josephine, after concluding her presentation, opened the floor for interventions and the Q/A session. The floor was given to the various cabinet Ministers and other financial and technical partners who took part in the webinar.

(a) The Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, **Mr. Jules Doret NDONGO** (see picture 2b) began his five minutes intervention by acknowledging the privilege and honour accorded him by the Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development (see picture 2a) by inviting him to the celebration of the 2022 International Day for Biodiversity. He equally acknowledged the experts and authors of the NBESA who to him did a formidable task in meticulously carrying out the assessment. He admitted that some pertinent revelations made were directly related to his sphere of influence and competence such as the drivers of biodiversity loss and related drivers such as forest management issues, agriculture, etc. He further stressed on the need for more in-depth research to be done in order to complete the missing gaps identified during the assessment.

Minister NDONGO went further to underline that any message converging towards strictly prohibiting access or use of natural resources by the population will be erroneous since most of these populations depends on those resources for the livelihood. He added that in as much as we have to conserve for diverse reasons, we equally have developmental projects that rely on the utilization of natural resources. To him, it would be most appropriate to highlight the measures and strategies undertaken by the government to promote sustainable management of natural resources through protected areas and restoration initiatives.

The Forestry and Wildlife Minister then pledged to work hand in gloves with the Minister of Environment with respect to resource mobilization issues raised by the National CBD Focal Point during her presentation. He disclosed that his Ministry already prepared and submitted advanced financing details for the setting up of a nation forest exploitation plan under the AFR100 project. The Minister continued and concluded his intervention by recognizing the existence of some limitations in the forest restoration programme and expressed the determination of his Ministry to preserve biodiversity by not only fighting against illegal forest exploitation and poaching for which a national strategy was adopted in 2020, but also by stepping up restoration programmes within a national plan for the extension of forest plantations that envisages 40 000 ha per year.

(b) The Minister of Water Resources and Energy on its part intervened as a key partner Ministry which was actively implicated in the assessment. Minister **Gaston ELOUNDOU ESSOMBA** (see picture 2d). He saluted the wisdom of the Minister of Environment in inviting him on the occasion of the 2022 biodiversity day celebrations and specifically to be one of the panelists on the high-level webinar to discuss Cameroon's Pioneer NBESA. He acknowledged with great satisfaction, the high quality of presentations made by the experts and expressed the total support of his ministry, in any initiative aiming at preserving biodiversity and bending the curve of the current trend in biodiversity loss as revealed in the assessment.

The Minister disclosed that his ministry is in a transition phase in the energy production sector with as contributory aim, to reduce the greenhouse gas emission rate in the country, by limiting fossil fuel consumption as well as deforestation for fuel wood harvesting. He illustrated this by projecting a video of the photovoltaic modular solar energy central plant in Guider in the North Region of Cameroon with 44.800 solar panels covering a surface area of 54 ha of land, with a production capacity of 15MW (see picture 10).



Picture 10: *The Guider solar energy plant*

(c) The Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries just like his colleagues of Forestry and Water Resources thanked the Minister of Environment for inviting him to the webinar. **Dr. TAIGA** (see picture 2c) expressed the commitment of his Ministerial Department in the sustainable management biodiversity within his sphere of influence. He underscored the important role sustainable exploitation of animal and plant genetic resources can play in the country's economy and ensuring food security. The Minister went further to list some actions carried out by his Ministerial Department in the fight against biodiversity loss amongst which we have:

- ✓ The fight against animal diseases in order to preserve life;
- ✓ A systemic approach in management of natural resources (plant & animal);
- ✓ Joint research with the Ministry of Environment on fishery and animal husbandry domains all geared towards the conscious synergy to fight against the decline in biodiversity.

Responding to remarks from the assessment experts regarding the lack of biodiversity data from his Ministerial Department during this assessment, the Minister explained that difficulties relating to availability of data from his Ministry wouldn't have existed if the competent officers /custodians of the data were contacted formally. He concluded his intervention by informing the Minister of Environment of the holding under his auspices, of a conference on fisheries and animal husbandry in the city of Douala-Cameroon where enough data on all national and international regulations related to the sustainable management of fisheries will be generated and open for use.

2.1.1.3. Interventions by International and National Partners

(a) The United Nations Development Programme BES-NET Team (UNDP BES-NET)

The UNDP BES-NET representative **Madam Yuko Kurauchi** (see picture 11) on her part started her intervention by congratulating the team of experts who carried out the assessment under the supervision of Mrs. Eloundou Josephine. She later continued by making the following remarks:

- ❖ UNDP together with UNEP-WCMC were honored to have worked and supported Cameroon's assessment team;
- ❖ The BES Assessment is embedded with a lot of findings which should however not be left fallow. If not utilized it will just be useless information;
- ❖ UNDP BES-NET is ready to continue working and to support Cameroon in the years ahead;
- ❖ UNDP's Commitment was not ending at this level of the process but will together with the other partners through the Cameroon UNDP Office to provide additional financial support with compliment of the donor Government of Germany BES Solution Fund so that the key messages of this BES assessment will be taken up by the Government of Cameroon, its partners and other stakeholders (from science to practice communities).



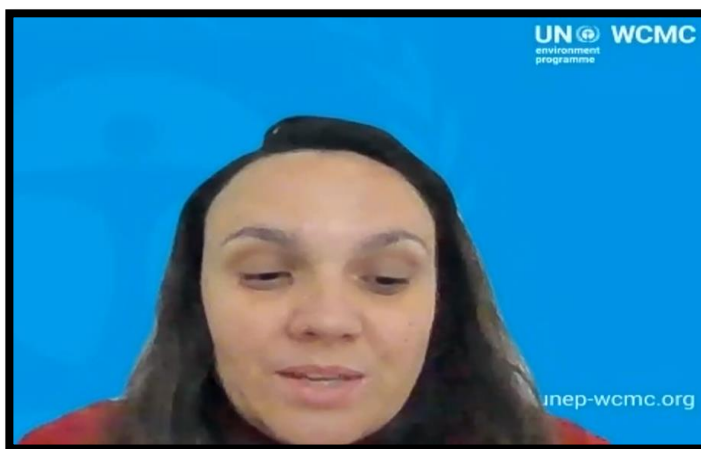
Picture 11: Mrs. Yuko Kurauchi, UNDP BES-NET representative

Information complementing those provided by Mrs. Yuko during her intervention was given by **Dr. Martin ZEH- NLO**, the Assistant Resident Representative of UNDP in Cameroon. He highlighted four essential points:

- ✦ The necessity to bring on board the sector Ministries so as to ensure a common science- policy interface;
- ✦ The need to clearly estimate the cost of putting into practice of the common initiative so as to facilitate political choices not only at the strategic level but also at the national level for effective change that could reverse the declining trend of biodiversity;
- ✦ The current modernization pattern through the sector/ decentralized model notwithstanding, calls for the need for a more scientific approach with for example a **climate-soil-water –energy nexus** with the current climate change factor that is crosscutting and brings in another perspective with both positive and negative consequences;
- ✦ The readiness of UNDP to continue the collaboration with the Ministry of Environment the process for which a certain number of pillars and tasks have been identified already.

(b) The United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC)

UNEP-WCMC’s spokesperson during the webinar appreciated in no small way, the efforts by the team of experts from Cameroon whom she disclosed has been the second country to profit from the UNEP-WCMC BES Assessment Initiative to finalize the assessment with leading experts from across the country. She congratulated the country’s efforts in strengthening the Science – Policy Interface platform which is already setting as a best practice across the region. She further highlighted the fact that the collaboration between them and Cameroon has been going on for over five years thanks to the fruitful engagement of the partners involved including the Ministry of Environment of Cameroon, the National IPBES Focal Point, NESDA-CA, the implementing Agency, UNDP and the International Climate Initiative from the federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection of the Federal Republic of Germany. UNEP-WCMC she said was looking forward to supporting Cameroon in the use of the findings at the next stage of the process.



Picture 12: Representative of UNEP-WCMC during the webinar

(c) WWF-CAMEROON

The representative of WWF-Cameroon **Ms. Marie Madeleine BASSALANG** in her intervention, began by thanking the experts for the great work done in the BES assessment and the Ministry of Environment for the diligent supervisory role played throughout the process. She seized the opportunity to equally disclose the initiatives WWF is actually engaged in at the moment in a project aimed at making available, scientific information on biodiversity as well as taking care of the immediate challenges of biodiversity conservation and valorization in Cameroon. She went further and highlighted that WWF has equally carried out a study on the national biodiversity current trends and status in line with the prescriptions of IPBES which was validated in 2021.

Ms. BASSALANG added that another in-depth study is being carried out under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment, aimed at establishing the impact of the strategic sectors projects on biodiversity. She disclosed that the two main sectors that have significant impact on biodiversity in Cameroon are the agriculture and the general infrastructures sectors (roads, railway lines, sea ports and airports constructions. WWF, she said is working in collaboration with Cameroon's Ministry of Environment under the framework of the BIODDEV2030 project to bring private institutions and sectors to make voluntary commitments to reduce the impacts of their activities on biodiversity which will be presented to the CBD at the negotiation table at COP15 planned for December 2022 in Montreal. She equally added that the BIODDEV2030 project's is been undertaken in 16 pilot countries and is engaged in supporting the ongoing CBD negotiations on the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. In concluding her intervention, she lauded Cameroon's political will to drive forward any initiative aimed at bending the current trend of biodiversity loss, while pledging the continuous support of WWF-Cameroon to the course of biodiversity as defined by the National Strategy and Action Plan.

(d) GIZ-CAMEROON

The representative of GIZ-Cameroon in her intervention presented the achievements of GIZ in its various interventions in Cameroon across the GIZ Bio-innovation project, GIZ-COMIFAC and GIZ Pro-PFE. She acknowledged with satisfaction the quality of work done by the Cameroon's NBESA team qualifying it as "very detailed and knowledgeable". She made known to the audience the scope of the work GIZ is engaged in and specified that at the sub regional and regional levels GIZ works with COMIFAC on divers' projects and at the national Level they a very actively partnering with the National Focal Point for Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) in the conduct of an inventory of traditional knowledge systems and genetic resources in order to enhance the sustainable management and consequently the valorization of these resources in Cameroon.



Picture 13: *Intervention of the representative of GIZ-Cameroon*

(e) United Nations Industrial Development Programme-Cameroon (UNIDO-Cameroon)

UNIDO-Cameroon was represented by **Ms. Chi Chantal** sitting in for their Country Representative. In her intervention, she appreciated the efforts of all the Ministry of Environment and the team of experts in the realization of the NBESA. She continued by stating that their presence at the celebration was to scoop for opportunities and possible areas of collaboration for future partnership with Cameroon's Ministry of Environment.

(f) International Union for Conservation of Nature-Cameroon (IUCN-Cameroon)

The representative of IUCN-Cameroon began by saluting the long and excellent collaboration between his institution and Cameroon's Ministry of Environment as well as that of Forestry and Wildlife. He seized the opportunity and announced their next Regional Biodiversity Programme which will implicate private sector initiatives within the West and Central African Region in the setting up of Networks to exchange on the principal impacts on biodiversity from the premises that all must put hands on the deck for the conservation of biodiversity. He concluded by expressing the desire of IUCN-Cameroon to fully engage in generating scientific data from the regional biodiversity programme that could further enrich BES research in Cameroon. He equally underscored the engagement of his institution in participating in resource mobilization to support biodiversity conservation and valorization in Cameroon.

(g) NESDA-CA

The coordinator of NESDA-CA, **Hon. NDO Angeline** ended the series of intervention from international and national partners by appreciating the presenters on the one hand and all the sector Ministers for their genuine commitments as exemplified by their active participation during the webinar exchanges. She made a clarion call for the authorities that be to give the findings of the study the attention it deserves and to do so following the already mapped out legally defined methodology for the benefit of all and sundry. In concluding, she recommended the government to take a firm stand to ensure that all projects to be carried out with potential negative impacts on biodiversity should be subjected to a scrupulous respect of the regulations in force.

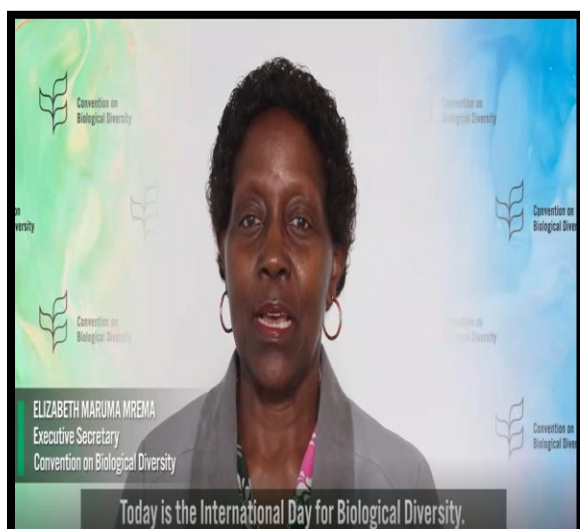
This intervention marked the end of part one of the celebrations and ushered in part two which was solely reserved for key note addresses from the CBD Executive Secretary of the CBD on the occasion of the International Biodiversity Day 2022 and Cameroon's Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development.

2.1.2. PART 2: Key note addresses from the Executive Secretary of the CBD and Cameroon's Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development

2.1.2.1. The Executive Secretary's IDB 2022 address

A projected rebroadcast of the Executive Secretary's address on the occasion of the 2022 International Biodiversity Day was done. In her address to the Nations, **Madam Elizabeth Maruma Mrema** (picture 14) declared that biodiversity was the foundation on which a shared future for all life could be built in order to achieve sustainable development. Without biodiversity we cannot solve the urgent challenges of the times; including climate change, health food and water security. When biodiversity is conserved

properly, used sustainably and share the benefits equitably, we get much closer to building a shared



future for all life on earth. She reminded the audience of the current tasks on CBD's table this year, which is to agree on a post 2020 Global biodiversity Framework that will set global goals and targets to put biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030 at the latest. Madam Mrema prescribed the effective protection of more of the world's lands, freshwater and oceans, ensuring sustainable consumption and production, mobilizing the necessary resources at all levels and ending harmful subsidies that damage the environment. She used the occasion to call on all to put hands on deck to give biodiversity the desired attention for the betterment of life for all.

Picture 14: *Madam Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, CBD Executive Secretary during her address on the occasion of the celebration of the 2022 International day for Biodiversity*

The broadcast of the Executive Secretary's address was keenly followed and appreciated by the all the participants present in the ceremonial hall (see picture 15 below).



Picture 15: *Participants keenly following the key note address of the CBD Executive Secretary*

2.1.2.2. The Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development's IDB 2022 address

The Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development delivered a keynote message in which he spotlighted his appreciation for the massive attendance by a broad spectrum of personalities both at the national level and international level (via the webinar). He reminded the audience of the decision of the UN assembly to dedicate the 22nd of May of each year for the celebration of the IDB. This year's celebration which marked the 29th edition is being celebrated in Cameroon for special reasons on the 30th May at the prestigious Conference Center in Yaounde under the theme

“building a common Future for all life “. Using statistical data to buttress his point, the **Honorable Minister of Environment HELE Pierre** emphasized that life cannot exist without biodiversity. He disclosed that 20% of protein supply for more than one third of the world’s population comes from fish. More so he stressed that, 80% of the air we breathe is supplied by plants, 80% of rural populations depend solely on medicinal plants and food supplied by biodiversity. This explains the importance of biodiversity to humanity and therefore calls for greater attention and concern. Minister HELE Pierre continued by highlighting that the decline of biodiversity in contemporary times is without doubt a real threat to the existence of all life in the world at large and Cameroon in particular. The loss of biodiversity, he said, was the cause of the numerous zoonotic diseases today. Whereas if biodiversity is properly conserved and sustainably used, it provides an excellent tool and material to fight against pandemics such as the COVID-19.

In his concluding lines, he voiced out the option taken by Cameroon under the leadership of the President of the Republic H.E Paul BIYA to give biodiversity the place it deserves by providing the necessary equilibrium in matters of biodiversity management and assuring the equitable sharing of benefits deriving from the utilization of our rich biodiversity. Cameroon, he added, is one of the leading countries to have adopted an ABS law which addresses the concerns of both those demanders and the custodians of genetic resources in the country.



Picture 16: Minister HELE Pierre exchanging with the national press and media on his key note address

2.1.3. PART 3: Price award ceremony

Some government and private secondary institutions that exceptionally distinguished themselves during the inter-school biodiversity challenges organized on the 23rd May 2022 where awarded prizes by the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development. After listening to excerpts of the poems, rhymes and songs delivered during the competitions, five (05) prizes were awarded to students from the two finalists’ schools namely the St. Therese Foundation and Revelation College of Mfou and Government Bilingual High School of Mfou. The five prizes were for the best school during the biodiversity quiz, the best rhyme, the two best poems and the best painting on biodiversity (see pictures 17 a, b, c, and d below).



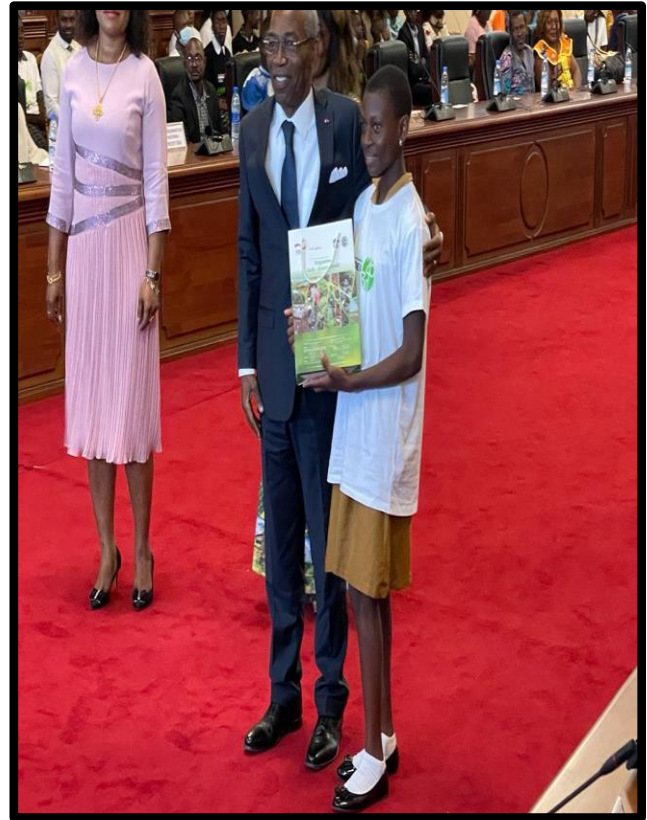
(a) A student of Government Bilingual High School presenting her rhyme



b) A student of St. Therese Foundation and Revelation College presenting her poem illustrated with paintings



c) The Honorable Minister of Environment handing the best painting prize award



d) The Honorable Minister of Forestry and Wildlife handing the 2nd best poem prize award

Picture 17 (a, b, c and d): Price award ceremony

2.14. PART 4: Visit to exhibition stands

The last articulation of the 2022 celebration of the IDB in Cameroon was the visit of exhibition stands by the Honorable Minister of Environment and his distinguished invitees. The exhibition stands gave the opportunity to the different technical and financial partners of Cameroon to showcase to the public and other stakeholders of biodiversity, their services, activities and products in the domain of biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits from the exploitation of genetic resources.

Stands we mounted by the Department of Conservation and Management of Natural Resources of the Ministry of Environment, representative associations of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and benefit sharing, GIZ-COMIFAC, WWF Cameroon and IUCN-Cameroon who exhibited gadgets, life medicinal plants and related documents and other materials which attest of their level of engagement in biodiversity conservation related projects in Cameroon (see pictures 18 a and b below).



a) The Honorable Ministers of Environment and Forestry and other invitees at the stand of the Ministry of Environment



b) The Honorable Ministers of Environment and Forestry and other invitees at the stand of the WWF-Cameroon

Picture 18 (a and b): Visit to exhibition stands

Furthermore, a special gastronomic stand was also present. The stand portrayed the various main cultural dishes characteristic of the ten (10) Regions of Cameroon as illustrated in pictures 19 a and b below.



a) Visit of the Honorable Ministers and other invitees to the gastronomic stand



b) The 2022 IDB celebration cake with some non-timber forest products

Picture 19(a and b): *Visit to the gastronomic stand*

V. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following key recommendations could be derived from this year's IDB celebrations in Cameroon:

To the CBD

- ❖ To continue in its incessant support to Parties to ensure that the stated 2050 vision of living together in harmony with nature and the 2030 milestones are attained.

To the Partner Organization

- ❖ To forge ahead as promised with their invaluable technical and financial support for the continuous vulgarization, dissemination and use of the findings from Cameroon's NBESA.

To the members of Government and Sector Ministries

- ❖ To put in practice effective measures that will ensure biodiversity mainstreaming into their respective sectors strategies.

To the Department of Conservation and Management of Natural Resources of the Ministry of Environment

- ❖ To continue to play the key role of bringing all stakeholders of biodiversity on board, taking into consideration the present decentralization option undertaken by the government of Cameroon to ensure synergy of action and effective implementation, at the local level, of the resolutions taken at regional and global levels.

To the Local and Decentralized Authorities

- ❖ To work hand in gloves with the National CBD Focal Point and all Public/ Private sector initiatives, to ensure adherence to the regulations in force.

VI. NEXT STEPS

The following next steps were identified:

- Cameroon's preparation and its effective and efficient participation in COP-15;
- The development of a communication strategy for the dissemination of the main findings from the NBESA;
- The revision of the current National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAPII);
- The effective mainstreaming of biodiversity in the National Development Strategy 2030 during its upcoming revision.

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