



Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wildlife in Tropical and Sub-tropical Forests

Statement to the XIII. World Forestry Congress on the Bushmeat Crisis

Introduction

The loss of tropical forest fauna is reaching critical levels. Forestry operations are often closely linked to commercial bushmeat hunting through logging roads and crews. The 'empty forest syndrome' and biodiversity loss caused by habitat degradation and the over-exploitation of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians in many tropical and sub-tropical countries has become a global threat:

- Up to 75% of tropical tree species depend on animal seed dispersal. Many tree species will no longer be able to reproduce without their seed dispersers, affecting ecosystem services.
- The degradation of forest ecosystems makes national and local economies weaker and more vulnerable to climate change.
- Food security for indigenous peoples and local communities is at risk. Up to 80% of protein intake in rural households in Central Africa comes from wild meat¹.
- Increasing human-wildlife contact and the related bushmeat trade spreads infectious diseases, such as Ebola and Nipah.
- Habitat loss increases human-wildlife conflict and reduces the potential for sustainable wildlife management.

The first CBD Liaison Group on Bushmeat² met 15-17 October 2009 in Buenos Aires. Some key recommendations of the Group with relevance for the forest sector are:

- **Sustainable management of wildlife:** Capacity building, incentives and alternatives must be implemented for hunters, traders and consumers to sustainably manage bushmeat.
- **Climate change:** Mechanisms such as REDD+ should take into account the importance of wildlife for healthy ecosystems and for the permanence of forest carbon stocks and forest adaptation capacity.
- **Forest concessions and certification:** Management plans and certification schemes for sustainable forest management (SFM) must include wildlife management, to maintain healthy and productive forest ecosystems.
- **Rights and tenure:** Local communities should be empowered to manage, and be accountable for, managing local resources in their own – and the national – best interest.
- **Good governance:** Policies and legal frameworks need to be reviewed and strengthened with full stakeholder participation, including all relevant sectors.
- **Landscape-level management:** An effective and coherent network of protected areas is essential but not enough. The conservation and sustainable management of wildlife outside of protected areas is equally important.
- **Partnerships:** Effective collaboration among national and international actors is needed.
- **Capacity building:** Effective management, including law enforcement, requires capacity building at national and local levels.

¹ The Liaison Group defines bushmeat (or wild meat) hunting as the harvesting of wild animals in tropical and sub-tropical forests for food and for non-food purposes, including for medicinal use.

² The meeting was convened in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC).

- **Science:** Decision-making should be based on best available scientific information; further research and better management of information are needed.

The bushmeat crisis is a complex problem, but feasible solutions do exist in many locations and regions. The Liaison Group recommends an open and transparent debate at the national level to better address the issue.

Strong leadership by governments and the private sector is needed to address the bushmeat crisis. The Bushmeat Liaison Group applauds those leaders in the public and private sector who are already supporting the conservation and sustainable use of forest fauna. The participants of the World Forestry Congress are encouraged to replicate the positive examples and success stories throughout the area of sub-tropical and tropical forests, where the decline of forest-based animals is a concern.

*The full report of the Bushmeat Liaison Group meeting is available on www.cbd.int
For more information please contact the CBD Secretariat at secretariat@cbd.int*

Further information is also available in CBD Technical Series Nr 43 “The Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wildlife-based Resources: The Bushmeat Crisis” (www.cbd.int/ts)