

# REDD+ politics in the media

A case study from Cameroon

Djiegni Félicien Kengoum



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# List of abbreviations

3E+	Efficiency, effectiveness, equity and co-benefits
ADEID	Action for Equitable, Integrated and Sustainable Development
ASMAC	Advanced School of Mass Communication
CED	Centre for Environment and Development
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CIRAD	Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique/International Centre for Cooperation in Agricultural Research
CNC	Conseil national de la communication/National Communications Council
COMIFAC	Commission des forêts d'Afrique centrale/Central Africa Forests Commission
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRETES	Centre de Recherche et d'Études en Économie et Sondages/Center for Economic and Survey Research
CRTV	Cameroon Radio and Television
ESSTIC	École supérieure des sciences et technologies de l'information et de la communication/ Advanced School of Mass Communication
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GCS-REDD+	Global Comparative Study on REDD+
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre
IDDRI	Institut du développement durable et des relations internationales/Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
IRAD	Institute of Agricultural Research for Development
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
ONG	Organisation non gouvernementale/Nongovernmental organisation
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing carbon stocks
REPAR	Réseau des parlementaires pour la gestion durable des écosystèmes forestier d'Afrique centrale, section du Cameroun/Network of Parliamentarians for Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa, Cameroon Section
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SOPECAM	Société de presse et d'édition du Cameroun/Association for the press in Cameroon
UJC	Union des journalistes du Cameroun/Cameroon Journalist Union
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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# Executive summary

The purpose of this study is to identify the media discourse on the subject of avoided deforestation in Cameroon and the authors of that discourse. A second purpose is to understand the changes in such discourse whilst identifying levels and centres of interest in order to assess the evolution of REDD+ in the country. The study also identifies reforms being discussed, both on the REDD+ process and at a broader level, and identifies the main actors and the implications of Cameroon media discourse on effectiveness, efficiency, equity and co-benefits (3Es+). This analysis is based on articles published between December 2005 and December 2009 in three carefully selected national newspapers using specific criteria. They were *Cameroun Tribune*, *Le Messenger* and *The Post*. The first is a government paper and the others are generally considered to have a critical eye on current events. To better understand the perception of media people on this issue, 12 journalists were interviewed. The results are presented and discussed bearing in mind the media's contextual conditions. A preliminary chapter provides elements to better understand the media sector and its influence on discussions about the media landscape for environment and development issues in Cameroon.

Research shows that only 14 articles on REDD+ were published in the three newspapers during the 5 year study period. The trend was upward from year to year: there were no articles published in December 2005 and in 2006, 1 article was published in 2007, 4 articles were published in 2008 and 9 out of 14 articles were published in 2009, the year of COP 15 in Copenhagen. Of the 14 authors, 11 are journalists, 1 is an academic and 1 is an employee of a national civil society organisation and 1 an employee of an international organisation. The most popular themes were politics and policy making (seven articles), forest ecology (four articles) and the economy and market-related issues, especially carbon trade (two articles).

The study shows that the subject is little discussed in the media at the national level, with input from a relatively small number of politicians. Furthermore, it identifies an interest in giving due attention to equity as an essential factor for the success of REDD+ in Central Africa. Last, it shows the weak dissemination of the idea of REDD+ and the need to provide actors, especially state actors, with background or supporting information.



# Introduction

The concept of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing carbon stocks (REDD+) is garnering increasing interest in discussions on policies to mitigate climate change, both at international and national levels. Despite ongoing discussions on the REDD+ process, many unclear issues remain. As a result of poor information, the main stakeholders (national, regional and local governments, the private sector, NGOs, local communities and indigenous people) have different and sometimes contradictory perceptions of the process. This confusion about the REDD+ concept sometimes leads to stakeholders expecting unrealistic results, be they positive or negative. This confusion also leads to speculative behaviour by certain actors, such as investors, who generally have a very limited idea of the process, and stakeholders connected to the introduction and functioning of REDD+, which is still fraught with uncertainties.

This study forms part of Component 1 of the Global Comparative Study on REDD+ (GCS-REDD) conducted by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). The overall goal of the project is to provide REDD+ policy makers and practitioner communities with the information, analysis and tools they need to ensure effective and cost-efficient reduction of carbon emissions with equitable impacts and co-benefits such as poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation – the ‘3E+’ criteria. Component 1 research analyses the emerging national policy processes for the design of REDD+ policies and strategies and their content. Analysis of the treatment of REDD+ related issues in major national media outlet is aimed at identifying the main discourses (and counter-discourses) in relation to REDD+ related issues. The media analysis gives a broad overview of how debates in the REDD+ policy domain are framed in single countries. In the debate on efforts to mitigate climate change, the effectiveness, efficiency, equity and co-benefits criteria are used to evaluate the options being proposed and the expected outputs (Stern 2008), as follows:

**Effectiveness:** Angelsen (2008) defines effectiveness as the difference between emissions with and without REDD. In other words if a REDD+ mechanism is established, will it be able to achieve the objectives set for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing absorptions? This criterion accommodates factors such as governance, monitoring, reporting and verification, and additionalities.

**Efficiency:** REDD+ efficiency explores how REDD+ objectives can be achieved at lowest cost. This criterion considers the initial investment costs, such as forestland protection. It also considers opportunity costs, such as compensating local populations for revenue they must forego for not deforesting the land or for not degrading existing forest. Efficiency also considers transaction costs that must be paid.

**Equity:** Equity refers to the distributions of costs and benefits stemming from REDD+ schemes and the involvement of land use stakeholders (local and indigenous populations) in REDD+ decision making.

**Co-benefits:** Beyond the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emission by preventing deforestation and forest degradation, other aspects are taken into account, including forestland conservation, improving the quality of governance, consideration for the rights of vulnerable groups and indigenous people, and improving capacity to adapt to climate change.

Our research started with three hypotheses. First, the governance context, actors engaged in governing, and the intentional and macroeconomic constraints are decisive in ensuring the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of REDD+. Second, the success of the REDD+ process depends on the dynamics of the authorities, commitment levels and capacity building. Last, it goes without saying that the absence of institutions and mechanisms to facilitate the process impedes the implementation of financial incentives needed to mitigate climate change by reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. These

hypotheses indicate that effective, efficient and equitable implementation of the REDD+ process and its co-benefits will require better knowledge of the governance context, especially of the relationship amongst various actors, policy processes, the national context and the national strategy for REDD+. Further, options for REDD+ policies must be precisely formulated and based on the knowledge acquired in this context.

At its outset in 2009, the Global Comparative Study on REDD+ decided to examine national processes and strategies in four countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon and Indonesia. The studies conducted at the national level will be compared in preparation for a global synthesis of the results. The steps in this method are:

1. Draw up a country profile on REDD+;
2. Evaluate the national REDD+ strategy;
3. Analyse the views of the media on the process; and
4. Analyse the political networks and study the policies.

The analyses of media discourse in each country aims to answer these questions:

- What are the main media that discuss issues related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation?
- Are there specific radio programmes that monitor public discussion on REDD? Which ones?
- What current political issue relating to REDD is discussed most in the main media in Cameroon today?
- From the Cameroonian experience, what subjects related to REDD are covered most by the media, and why? Are they connected to technical, economic, political or scientific aspects, or to environmental justice?
- Who are the main people orchestrating this discourse?
- How has the REDD+ issue been incorporated in media discourse in Cameroon?
- What are the main events in national politics that trigger discourse about REDD+ in the media?
- What are the main sources of information about REDD+ for the media in Cameroon?

Discourse, on the ties between trees and climate change in Cameroon are not new, especially in the media. Increasingly intense debate can be traced to the 'Green Sahel' project of the 1980s that aimed to combat desertification in the northern, Sahelian part of the country. Journalists, amongst other, immediately connected this project to the term 'reforestation', which is not specific to Cameroon. 'Reforestation' became a key term in all discourse on the role trees play in mitigating climate change. Concerns about the role of trees in mitigating climate change then spread to the southern part of the country. This discourse thus sparked the development of a media vocabulary, which for some years now has preferred to use the terms 'afforestation' and 'reforestation'. This illustrates the increasing importance of the role of the 'forest' (afforestation, deforestation/reforestation) not just the role of 'woods'/'bois' as (*déboisement/reboisement*) in the lives of local people, with focus on the recently recognised impact on climate. Henceforth, the focus is no longer exclusively on the tree alone, but rather on 'the forest and beyond'<sup>1</sup> as can be seen in the media discourse about the media's own capacity to provide enlightening information and foresight of use in decision-making.

We might ask ourselves how the Cameroonian media express what they have read about the international debate on the inclusion of the avoided deforestation concept in a post-Kyoto agreement.

The study is organised into four chapters:

- Presentation of the Cameroonian media contextual conditions
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion and analysis

The study confirms that discussion on avoided deforestation is still limited in the Cameroonian media and that the media do not put forward the view of all stakeholders in the REDD+ mechanism. The media treats only a limited set of aspects, not the whole range of REDD+-related issues. There are several possible explanations: the newness of the subject, the relative lack of progress in discussing REDD+ in the Cameroonian context, the elitist character of the debate or the sensitivity of the subject since the stakes are high.

1 CIFOR 2004, *Thinking Beyond Canopy*, CIFOR, Bogor, Indonesia.

# 1. Understanding the contextual conditions of the Cameroonian media

A description of the Cameroonian media, with all its contingencies, is a prerequisite to understanding the analysis of media discourse on REDD+ in Cameroon. It is important to consider factors that can affect the capacity of the media to cover scientific subjects such as REDD and to better understand the influence that people in the REDD+ arena in Cameroon can have over publications. The feedback that high quality media debate and information can have on forestry policy choices in Cameroon is also important.

Cameroon, which includes the second largest forested area in the Congo basin within its boundaries after the Democratic Republic of Congo, is especially concerned with the question of REDD+. Discussions have been held on the subject; the media coverage of these discussions facilitates the identification of the main stakeholders and the main topics discussed. In Cameroon, about 15 newspapers publish regularly, including the bilingual daily *Cameroon Tribune* that presents government policy. The main private newspapers deemed to be critical of the government include the French language papers *Mutations*, *Le Messenger* and *La Nouvelle Expression*, and the English language papers *The Herald* and *The Post*. Other publications are considered close to the government, including *Anecdote*. The main regional newspapers are *Ouest Echo* in the west and *L'Œil du Sahel* in the north. Nearly all of the newspapers have offices in Douala or Yaoundé, the two main cities.

## 1.1. Mixed feelings between the media and State authorities

For several years, the media world experienced crisis marked by its difficult relations with state authorities (Paquot and Abegas 2000). The media in Cameroon have always had mixed relations with the country authorities, who have been in power since 1982. In

the 1980s, private media sought the state's approval to make the communication sector more liberal, and asked for state support through annual subsidies. The umbilical ties of the early years are now coupled with conflicts that have been raging since 1990 (Paquot and Abegas 2000).

### 1.1.1. Conflictual relations between the media and state authorities

The media, as we know, can sometimes directly influence politics and governance. In some countries, the written press affected and catalysed transition to democracy. Although the press is a source of inspiration for certain issues central to politics and government, politicians and the government authorities often emphasise—in Cameroon—that it is up to them, not to the journalists or to the media, to set the political agenda. Political responsibility devolves to them, even if they are not always up to it.

In the Press Freedom Index 2010, *Reporters sans Frontières* ranked Cameroon as 129th of 178 countries. The authors of this classification feel that Cameroon is still swaying between repression and liberalisation, and that taboos are still not to be broken (Le Coz 2008). It is even becoming difficult for some people to associate openly with members of the media who are considered as supporters to the opposition, out of fear that their actions will be interpreted as active support for the political opposition. The same is true for politicians who hesitate to respond to media inquiries other than those from the national daily the *Cameroon Tribune*.

### 1.1.2. Media dependence on state authority

Since the 1990s, the Cameroonian government has taken steps to give the press and other media a

healthy environment in which to express itself. The law enacted 19 December 1990 supports the freedom of social communication, the law of 4 January 1996 abolishes administrative censorship, and the decree and the order of the Prime Minister both dated 9 December 2002 institutes the press card. All three were crafted to polish up the tarnished image of the Cameroonian press (Dassie 2004) and strengthen the media's capacity to assimilate and affect the country's political positions and choices. By an order of 23 September 2002 of the Minister of Communication, the government has established a national commission to review applications for public support for private communication. This support includes financial aid and training for journalists. Following this ministerial order, many new press services have sprouted in order to become eligible for the subsidy. At the same time, the subsidy is too small to provide journalists with the specialised training they need.

The Cameroonian government originally intended to improve the working conditions of the media, but instead has contributed to increasing their dependence on the state. The press card, for instance, used to be issued directly to journalists by their employers, but now it is issued by a press card commission that is a mixed, autonomous and professional self-regulating body under the authority of the Minister of Communication.

## 1.2. Difficult relationships between journalism and science

Scientific journalism in Cameroon is facing both structural and economic difficulties. We examine answers to two questions. First, what are the consequences of the journalists' lack of specialised knowledge on the quality of the information published? Second, what resources are needed to support this type of journalism in so mixed a context as the one in Cameroon?

### 1.2.1. Scientific journalism: the backwoods cousin of Cameroonian communication

Analyses of media in Cameroon have often focused exclusively on the general information pages. Even on the Internet, it is impossible to find a single study designed to evaluate the impact of media discourse on forestry issues and more specifically

on the problem of avoided deforestation. Limiting journalism or media space to general news seems detrimental from the point of view of the people who produce the information as well as the people who are informed by the media, since the potential of the so-called scientific pages could be enormous. Scientific journalism seems to be the backwoods cousin of communication in Cameroon.

Cameroonian journalists do not yet have the knowledge or know-how needed to produce feature articles on development issues in general or, more specifically, on issues related to avoided deforestation.

A look at the history of journalism training in Cameroon, using Advanced School of Mass Communication (ASMAC) sources, shows that one class in this prestigious journalism school of Central Africa has focused on environmental issues, namely, health and environment. A minimum of training is available in this field. As described by Francis Wete , professor at the Advanced School of Mass Communication at the University of Yaoundé 1 (Table 1).

**Table 1. Twenty communication courses offered at ASMAC**

News Reporting	Theories of Mass Communication
Advertising	Organisational Communication
Semiology	Economics of the Media
Press Law	Television News Editing
News Editing	Management in Media
News Analysis	Communication Technology
Public Relations	Development Communication
Computer Editing	Television News Reporting
Mass Media History	Investigative Reporting
Radio News Reporting	Research Methodology

Source: Wete (no date)

Efforts have been made in Cameroon to give scientific journalism, especially related to environmental sciences, a chance to prosper. For example the 'Media Speak about the Environment' project in 2009 trained close to 40 journalists to deal with environmental information. The project was organised by the Youth for the Environment association, partnering with ESSTIC and the Institute for Research and Development (IRD). Its purpose was to have skilled media professionals circulate environmental information to the resident population. This project launched media on the environment awards, for 'lions verts', or green lions.

### 1.2.2. Media plans for non-state organisations: Support for scientific journalism

The media are responsible for conveying information and, usually, supporting media plans for international institutions, nongovernmental organisations and other civil society organisations. The vocation of the media is to inform, influence subjects of debate, and sometimes impact choices, but media professionals still rely heavily on press releases that organisations distribute. In Cameroon, journalists are generally paid to get such information placed in their media outlet or newspaper. The question of the media's capacity to influence the selection of REDD+ options in Cameroon goes beyond the scope of the media alone. Media people are looked upon as leading actors in the political life of the country, but they still depend on experts from scientific organisations to deal with scientific subjects such as REDD+.

### 1.3. The effect of money on media discourse in Cameroon: The boomerang effect of bad wage practices

The Cameroonian written press has material problems. The financial situation of most newspapers is precarious because of the price of newsprint and printing, and the narrowness of the advertising market. Journalists' wages in the private press are demeaning. Wage levels vary enormously between the state-supported press, e.g. *Cameroon Times*, and the private sector press, e.g. *Le Messager* and *The Post*. Because private sector journalists earn so little,

many of them sell space and time at bargain prices in the written press and in radio and television. These precarious working conditions have a backlash effect on private sector journalism in general and more specifically on individual journalists. Certain columns read more like paid-for infomercials (*publi-reportage*) than news articles.

The existence of the National Communications Council (NCC), and many self-regulating press services such as the Cameroon Union of Journalists (CUJ), and even the freedom that Cameroonian law leaves to the private sector to negotiate employment contracts, have not been enough to unite the Cameroonian press around a common ideal. The fact that a collective bargaining agreement was signed with the communication sector in 2010 gives a ray of hope for reforms to journalists' working conditions, especially in the written press.

In discussions on the REDD+ process, there is a risk that low wages will influence the contents of publications that may be manipulated by invisible actors with power and obscure interests. Articles might ultimately reflect the interests of whoever finances the official political discourse or special interests that oppose the objectives of sustainable management of forest ecosystems.

## 1.4. Cameroonian public information means for REDD+

Information on REDD+ disseminated to the Cameroonian public depends heavily on the media landscape, which includes written and audiovisual media and, recently, digital media. Over the last few years, enormous changes have occurred that bring the media closer to their target audiences. However, information on special subjects, especially scientific subjects are generally printed elsewhere than in the general press.

### 1.4.1. Media outlets in Cameroon

#### The written press

The specialised press provides information on specific fields, e.g. *La Voix du Paysan* publishes news that especially targets a rural readership, whilst *Bubinga*

(now losing ground) is specialised in forestry issues. Print figures for the daily newspapers in our study are open to question. Our sources reported that the *Cameroon Tribune* prints about 15,000-20,000 copies a day, without including the approximate 10,000 copies sent to government services and subscribers. Their total print run is about 30,000-35,000 copies. According to the most recent national census, the total Cameroonian population was about 19,400,000, with half under the age of 18. Apparently this half (9,700,000) does not have access to the written press. Furthermore, 50% of the adults in the first half (4,850,000) live in rural areas and do not have enough money to buy a newspaper every day. The final ratio, thus, is one copy of the *Cameroon Tribune* for approximately 139 inhabitants and shows that the Cameroonian press is, in the main, unavailable to the general public. If we were to calculate the same ratio for the two other newspapers in this study we would see even less impact since they print fewer copies than the national daily.

### Radio and television

As of 2010, *Radio Environment* is the country's only audiovisual media that, as the name indicates, specialises in environmental questions. In an interview, the programming director said that the broadcasts that mentioned REDD+ were produced during the Copenhagen conference in December 2009. The guests for that programme were American experts who were going to Copenhagen to advocate in support of REDD+. Radio and TV broadcasts on environmental subjects in Cameroon are generally scheduled in time slots when audiences are smaller since prime time is usually reserved for serials and newscasts. The audiovisual media usually present a press review in the morning. Many Cameroonians listen to commentators read headlines from the newspapers. These headlines only feature the environment or other specific topics when events such as the COP are at the top of the news, and this is rare.

### What about Internet in REDD+ communication?

Internet has reached pride of place in the information world in Cameroon, especially in Douala and Yaoundé where the network is extensive and people manage to access it. There are few blogs on avoided deforestation and REDD+ that are based in Cameroon. We have seen that most blogs that discuss REDD+ are on the websites of international and, occasionally, national environmental organisations. Unlike the level of discourse in other media, discussions on REDD+ on these blogs of international organisations are very advanced and the process is considered from every angle. From a presentation of this new mechanism (interests at stake, actors on site, potential sources of funding, etc.) to criticisms of certain aspects (the role foreigners play in deforestation in central African countries), the bloggers heavily-handedly put forth as many questions as possible and give opinions and arguments that are more, or less, relevant. Discussions about REDD+ amongst the broader public in Cameroon, however, are still not popular, even in blogs. Most bloggers focus more on the issues affecting the Congo basin, and REDD+ as part of that.

### The capacity of media discourse to influence the selection of REDD+ options

As to the capacity of media discourse to influence forest policy choices, journalists said that the media served as instruments to meet the goals of international organisations; media content reflects the views of these 'sponsors'. The journalist is not always sufficiently independent or informed. In some cases, media content may be the result of manipulation. Hence, journalists do not yet publish opinion pieces on specific issues such as REDD+ in Cameroon. Their media discourse, as directed by international organisations and other experts, is not strong enough to influence choices relating to forestry policy. In fact, there are no signs of controversy, not even any clearly expressed, specific challenges. Similarly, the media do not promote discussion, but merely present the REDD+ process.

2 We have not been able to obtain more information on this subject.



## 2. Methodology

To ensure comparability with the other countries involved in CIFOR's GCS (Global Comparative Study on REDD+), methodologies for this study were standardised at a meeting held from 5 to 7 January 2010 in Barcelona, Spain, and the results were matched and merged at a meeting held from 27 April to 1 May 2010 in Bogor, Indonesia<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.1. Selection of newspapers and articles

The study was explicitly limited to three newspapers.

#### 2.1.1. Press services

The selection of newspapers was based on four criteria: date of creation (at least five years), number of copies printed each day (to have an idea of the reader penetration rate in the population), reputation (information on credibility of publication) and coverage (large variety of ideologies and positions in the Cameroonian political landscape).

After evaluating the existing newspapers, three were selected for the study: *Cameroon Tribune*, *Le Messenger* and *The Post*.

#### Cameroon Tribune

The daily newspaper *Cameroon Tribune*, created in 1974, is considered to be the voice of the state. According to anonymous sources at the SOPECAM printing house, 15 000–20 000 copies are printed each day, plus another 10 000 that are delivered to

government services and subscribers. It is available throughout the country (although it arrives one day late in certain regions). As a bilingual newspaper, the *Cameroon Tribune* publishes in the two official languages, French and English. Its head office is in Yaoundé and the publications director is Marie-Claire Nnana.

After we had completed our online search for the whole study period we discovered that some articles had been omitted. Opinion pieces written by people other than the journalists had not been put online, which meant that we had to manually review the newspaper's archives for the period covered by the study. To be sure that the job was done thoroughly, a specially trained student conducted this additional search.

#### Le Messenger

The French-language daily, *Le Messenger*, established in 1979, is considered to be Cameroon's main opposition paper. The newspaper's editorial policy is to criticise shortcomings in the government's positions and actions. The Director, Pius Njawa says that his newspaper tries to show that the authorities could do better in all fields. The head office is in Douala. Statistical information on *Le Messenger's* distribution is sensitive and difficult to verify. We did not receive official figures, but a source reported that the minimum number of copies was 3000–3500 per day. It is published in French and distributed across 60% of the national territory by Messapresse, the only authorised distribution company for the written press.

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<sup>2</sup> The methodology for this analysis was adapted by Monica Di Gregorio of the Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics, from the 'Code book for the analysis of media frames in REDD articles' by Stephan Price (University of Kent) and Clare Saunders (University of Southampton), written in 2009 and applied in a policy research programme on climate change, COMPON, led by Jeffrey Broadbent (University of Minnesota). The long-term scientific goal of COMPON is to explain the variation in national response to global climate change under the emerging international regime. Examining the causes of this variation from the perspective of networks of discourse and policy-making interaction among relevant organisations and knowledge brokers, the project collects empirical data for rigorous comparative analysis. CIFOR's project materials and guidelines with the adapted methodology are expected to be available in early 2011 at [www.ForestsClimateChange.org](http://www.ForestsClimateChange.org).

It was difficult searching for articles at *Le Messenger* because electronic archiving only started in October 2009 and the updating process is taking time. The newspaper is online at <http://www.lemessenger.net>, but only articles published by journalists are uploaded to the site, which means that there are no advertisements, announcements or opinion pieces. Then we went through hard copies of the newspaper on the whole period of the study to collect the information we needed.

### The Post

*The Post* was created in 1997 and reflects the outlook of the English-speaking regions of Cameroon, namely the Northwest and the Southwest, formerly West Cameroon. The newspaper is published twice a week, Monday and Thursday. Its director, Charly Ndi Chia, said that the number of copies printed depended on the events of the day. The range is between 3000 and 4500. It is distributed informally in the Northwest and Southwest regions and by Messapresse in the rest of the country.

*The Post* is usually published in English. It has been online since 2005: <http://www.thepostwebedition.com>. All articles are put online, but no advertisements or announcements. The archives are gradually being brought up to date for all sections.

#### 2.1.2. The articles

The next step was to select articles on avoided deforestation in French and in English, the two national languages of Cameroon. We retrieved them from the websites, or received them as electronic copies or hard copies from the participating newspapers. Articles were selected if they pertained to REDD+ and had been published between December 2005 and December 2009. Keywords in English and French were used to select the articles:

- REDD
- Reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation/*Réduction des émissions dues à la déforestation et à la dégradation*
- Avoided deforestation/*déforestation évitée*
- Emissions from deforestation/*émissions dues à la déforestation*.

Articles from the websites of the *Cameroon Tribune* and *The Post* were collected by visually scanning each column and each page to make certain that the articles were representative. Then they were compared with the paper copies in the archives of the two newspapers, in Yaoundé and in Douala, to ensure that there were no discrepancies. Since the website of *Le Messenger* is recent, and had not been completed for the study period, data were collected from the digitised archives in the head office in Douala and were then compared with the paper version from the newspaper.

## 2.2. Encoding articles

The articles collected were encoded using an ACCESS database. The methodology required the data to be coded at three levels, which corresponded to the codes.

The first encoding level captures descriptive variables, the date of publication, the number of words, the title, and if the article was off topic. These were the criteria for deciding whether the article should be further encoded to search for information.

The second encoding level is a set of first and second frame analysis variables based on the article's content. At this level, an evaluation is made of the various angles used to consider the question (diagnostic, symptomatic, etc.), the scale (national, international, local, etc.) and the major themes (ecology, the economy, markets politics and processes, etc.) and subthemes.

The third encoding level assesses the actors (participants in the debate, whether they share opinions or not), their category (union, individual, NGO, etc.) and their opinion about REDD+ (optimistic, pessimistic). The participants' main concerns about the 3E+ (effectiveness, efficiency, equity and co-benefits) criteria are also coded. This level factors in protest and political events. It also identifies the main individuals who have connections with REDD+ and are mentioned in the articles.

### 2.3. Selection of journalists interviewed

The journalists who were interviewed merely had to belong to the public or private written or audiovisual press, be informed and work in the environment sector. The interviews were carried out between March and June 2010. The questionnaire for the interview was drawn up using the GCS-REDD+ component 1 guidelines that ensured comparability, but left enough leeway to accommodate specific

national features. Of the 24 journalists who met the criteria and were asked to participate, 12 agreed to a formal interview (4 radio journalists and 8 from the written press).

Some of the 12 journalists wanted to participate anonymously. This condition was respected and the study did not divulge their identity, although their comments were included. This was in line with the confidentiality agreement.

### 3. Findings

To facilitate interpretation of the data, we separated the study’s findings into three levels of analysis: The Level 1 sets out the descriptive variables of the articles. Level 2 describes the main topics discussed in the articles and Level 3 reveals actors, their discourses and counterdiscourses on REDD+ issue.

#### 3.1. Level 1: Articles collected: The descriptive variables

##### Articles

Keyword searches, described in the previous chapter, were used to collect a total of 14 articles. Information relative to the articles is presented in the summary tables hereunder. During the study period, the *Cameroon Tribune* published 10 of the 14 articles, *Le Messenger* published 3 and *The Post*, one. Figure 1 represents a breakdown of articles per publication. Only in one article was ‘avoided deforestation’ not the main subject of the article.

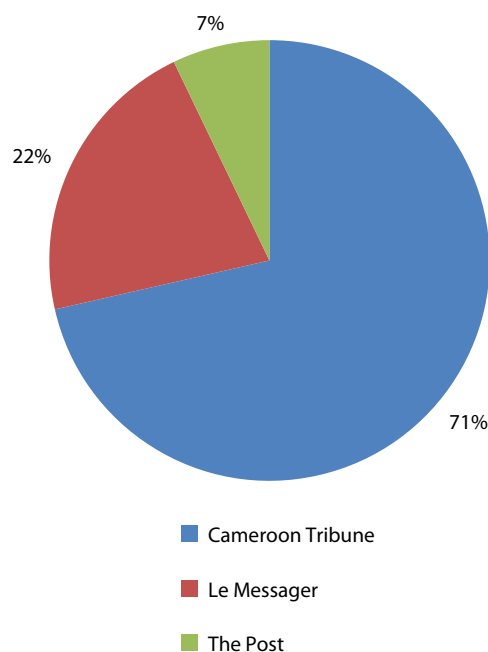


Figure 1. Breakdown of articles per newspaper

Table 2. Summary of collected articles

Article Code	Publication	Author	Date and section	Title
20091222CT1	Cameroon Tribune	Makon ma Pondi	22 Dec. 2009 Editorial	‘Réponses endogènes’ (Endogenous solutions)
20091218CT2	Cameroon Tribune	Maurice Tsalefac	18 Dec. 2009 International	‘La classe politique doit prendre conscience des mutations de l’environnement’ (The political class must take into account environmental changes)
20091218CT3	Cameroon Tribune	Lukong Pius Nyuylime	18 Dec. 2009 International	‘Cameroon’s Five Practical Steps’
20091217CT4	Cameroon Tribune	Emmanuel Tataw	17 Dec. 2009 Politics	‘President Paul Biya to Address Climate Change Summit Today’
20091211CT6	Cameroon Tribune	Josiane R. Matia	11 Dec. 2009 Politics	‘Changement climatique: l’Afrique veut parler d’une même voix’ (Climate change: Africa wants to speak with one voice)

Article Code	Publication	Author	Date and section	Title
20091208CT5	Cameroon Tribune	Charles Le Grand Tchagneno	8 Dec. 2009 Economy	'Changements climatiques: le CED et Greenpeace proposent des alternatives' (Climate change: the CED and Greepeace propose alternatives)
20091204LM2	Le Messenger	Souley Onohiolo	4 Dec. 2009 Guest	'Il y a beaucoup d'enjeux pour la conférence de Copenhague' (Much is at stake at the Copenhagen Conference)
20091111CT7	Cameroon Tribune	Emmanuel Etouke Ebouele	11 Nov. 2009 Economy	'La forêt, c'est la vie' (Forests are life)
20091001LM1	Le Messenger	Azap NDONGO	1 Oct. 2009 Society - Environment	Le défi de la société civile (The challenge facing civil society)
20081213TP1	The Post	Leocadia Bongben and Victorine Biy Yongka	13 Dec. 2008	'Echoes of promote: forest village debate on challenges'
20080425CT8	Cameroon Tribune	Lukong Pius Nyuylime	25 April 2008 Economy	'Forest, climate change: urgent need to readapt'
20080424CT9	Cameroon Tribune	Cameroon Tribune	24 April 2008 Economy	Forêt: une journée pour penser l'avenir (Forest: a day to think about the future)
20080423LM3	Le Messenger	Nadège Christelle Bowa	23 April 2008 Society - Environment	'Comment faire avancer le débat sur les forêts et l'atténuation des changements climatiques en Afrique centrale' (How to advance discussions on mitigating climate change in Central Africa)
20070612CT10	Cameroon Tribune	Cyrie Sendashonga	6 Dec. 2007 Ideas	'Le concept « déforestation évitée » : une formule « gagnant-gagnant » pour l'Afrique centrale et la planète' (The concept of avoided deforestation: a win-win formula for Central Africa and the planet)

Table 3. Articles collected by keyword and newspaper

Keywords	Newspaper			Number of articles
	Cameroon Tribune	Le Messenger	The Post	
REDD	9	3	0	12
Reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation/ Réduction des émissions dues à la déforestation et à la dégradation	0	0	0	0
Avoided deforestation/Déforestation évitée	1	0	0	1
Emissions due to deforestation/ Emissions dues à la déforestation	0	0	1	1
Total	10	3	1	14

We were easily able to find articles on the subject using the acronym ‘REDD’; it helped us find 12 of the 14 articles that were collected. ‘REDD’ was used for the first time by the press in Cameroon in an article entitled, ‘The concept of “avoided deforestation”: a win-win formula for Central Africa and the planet’ (*Le Concept « déforestation évitée » : une formule « gagnant-gagnant » pour l’Afrique centrale et la planète*), written by Cyrie Sendashonga and published in *Cameroon Tribune* under the headline, ‘A Prologue to the First Forest Day’, held 8 December 2007. ‘REDD’ was used for the last time during the study period in an article written by Makon ma Pondi for the *Cameroon Tribune* on 22 December 2009, under the headline ‘Endogenous Solutions’ (*Réponses endogènes*).

Whilst most newspapers in Cameroon are not specialist publications, like *Bubinga* (forests) and *La voix du paysan* (rural issues), they generally have a dedicated section for environment and health. However, the *Cameroon Tribune* did not have an environment section and articles about REDD+ appeared in different sections of the newspaper. In the case of the *Cameroon Tribune*, one article appeared in the editorial section, two in the international section, two in the political section, and four in the economy section. In *Le Messenger*, two articles were published in the society-environment section and one in the ‘Ideas’ section.

This ambivalence in the choice of sections may be inherent to a fundamental issue facing journalists: will the scope of REDD+ mechanisms be limited to forests, or will it be broadened to include related areas such as agriculture, politics, economy or other forms of land use? (Baker and McKenzie 2009)

Figure 2 shows that 9 of the 14 articles were published in 2009, 4 in 2008, and only 1 in 2007. No articles were published on the subject in December 2005, and the same is true for all of 2006. The breakdown in this chart illustrates the growing interest of the media in the subject as of 2007.

The authors of the articles and participants in discussions on REDD+ mentioned by the media in Cameroon have an international perspective on the issue in 10 articles, whilst 3 of them attempt to view the issue on a national scale. The last article did not refer to international, national or local scale. There are no discussions on a regional or local scale.

In 2007, when discussions on REDD+ were first covered by the media in Cameroon, all articles published had an international perspective. Discussions of the issue on a national scale began to appear in 2008 with the publication of ‘The Forest: a Day to Think about the Future’ (*Forêt : une journée pour penser l’avenir*), published in the *Cameroon Tribune*. Coverage remained limited until December

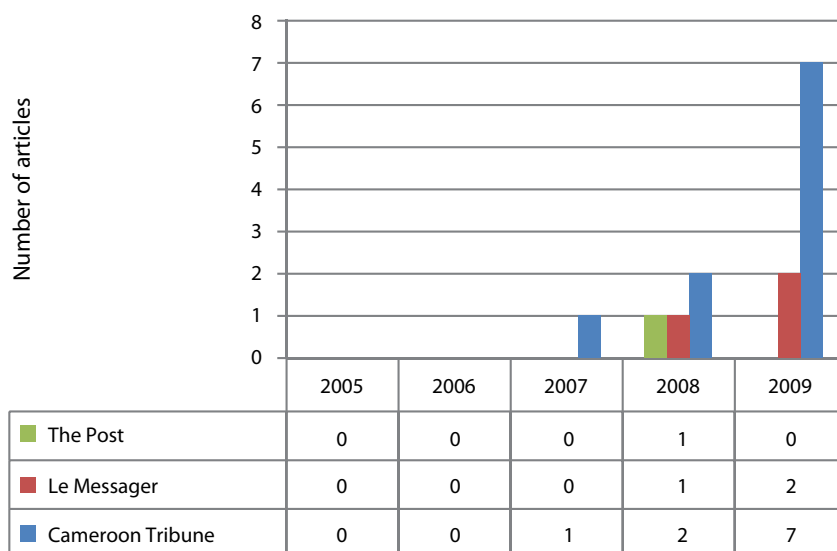


Figure 2. Articles published per newspaper, per year

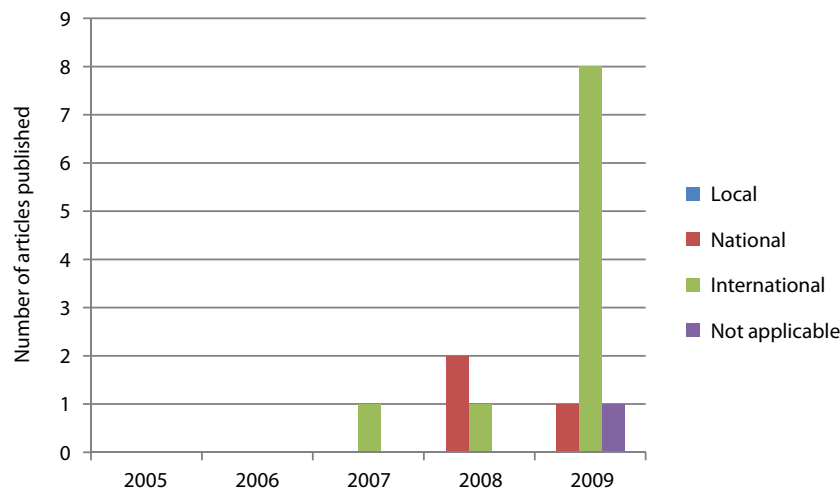


Figure 3. Perspective of articles by year

2009 when the international debate intensified in response to discussions before and after the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. In the vast majority of cases, articles were published around an international or national event. The event that led to the greatest number of articles (9) published on REDD in the Cameroonian press was the Copenhagen conference. The number of articles published from 11 November through 31 December 2009 indicates that the press seems not particularly interested in REDD+ mechanisms but that it used events to produce special reports on the subject. In fact, at the time of the Bali Conference, the Cameroonian press did not react as significantly to the observations and findings relative to the inclusion of forests in a post-Kyoto climate change convention.

#### REDD+ related events mentioned in the articles

The articles mention several REDD+-related events, described below. None of the articles in the sample mention anti-REDD+ events.

#### National events

In Yaoundé, CIFOR organised a one-day event called Forest Days in 2008 and 2009. These events brought together stakeholders in matters related to forest management in Cameroon, and are mentioned four times. Another event that is mentioned is the creation of a national observatory on climate change by President Paul Biya.

#### International events

Two international events were mentioned, the UNFCCC climate change conferences held in Bali in 2007 (COP 13), and in Copenhagen (COP 15) in 2009. Discussions in Bali focused on a new climate pact and an appeal to countries to take significant action in efforts to mitigate climate change. In Copenhagen, discussions focused on the need to give REDD a leading role in the post-Kyoto agreement, the importance of a common stance for Africa, and the role of financing in the process. The summit held in Ouagadougou on sustainable development and the meeting of African governments in Addis Ababa in October 2009 to establish a common position amongst African countries for the COP 15 negotiations, were mentioned as reminders. Additionally, mention is made of the president's travels to international events where environmental issues were discussed.

A comparison of national and international events and the number of publications per year clearly shows that coverage of REDD+ by the Cameroonian media increased. It started with the CoP in Bali in 2007 and peaked during the Copenhagen COP in December 2009.

#### The authors

The list of authors shows that most articles in the sample were written by journalists, 10 of the 14

authors with whom we met for this study,<sup>3</sup> but authors included a university professor and the regional representative of CIFOR.<sup>4</sup>

**Journalists interviewed**

The following journalists agreed to be named after our interview:

- **Beaugas Orain Njoyoum**, journalist at the daily newspaper *Le Jour*, former stringer at the Centre for Environment and Development (CED) and journal *Bub'inga*
- **Yaouba Djaligue**, editorial coordinator for *Le Financier d'Afrique*, formerly at *Cameroon Tribune* and CED
- **Marie Pauline Voufo**, journalist at *La Voix du Paysan*, a newspaper for farming communities that specialises in promoting agriculture
- **Willy Aristide Wandji**, journalist and chief editor of IUCN-Cameroon's *Radio Environment*
- **Christophe Mvondo**, journalist at the newspaper *La Nouvelle Expression*
- **Léger Ntiga**, journalist and senior assistant chief editor at the daily newspaper *Mutations*
- **Bertille Monè**, journalist at New TV and recipient of the Médias environnement award
- **Makon Ma Pondi**, journalist at *Cameroon Tribune*, editorialist

The journalists stated that they regularly published articles on deforestation, illegal extraction of natural resources, sustainable development and climate change. They also told us that they had some understanding of REDD+.

Journalists who had learned about REDD+ some time ago stated that they had heard about it in 2007. In 2007 the Bali conference took place, where the RED mechanism was first defined. Half of the remaining journalists learned of REDD in 2008, the other half in 2009. In all cases, their first contact with the subject was due to a national or international event, CIFOR's Forest Day in Cameroon or the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. Some, especially the chief editor of IUCN's *Radio Environment*, felt that journalists had access to 'environmental technicians ... REDD specialists who can talk about it'.

**3.2. Level 2: Main REDD+ topics as discussed in media**

Articles can have one or more frames. A frame here is defined as an analysis variable based on the article's content. The main content or idea debated on a specific topic is considered the first frame and the second idea discussed is the second frame.

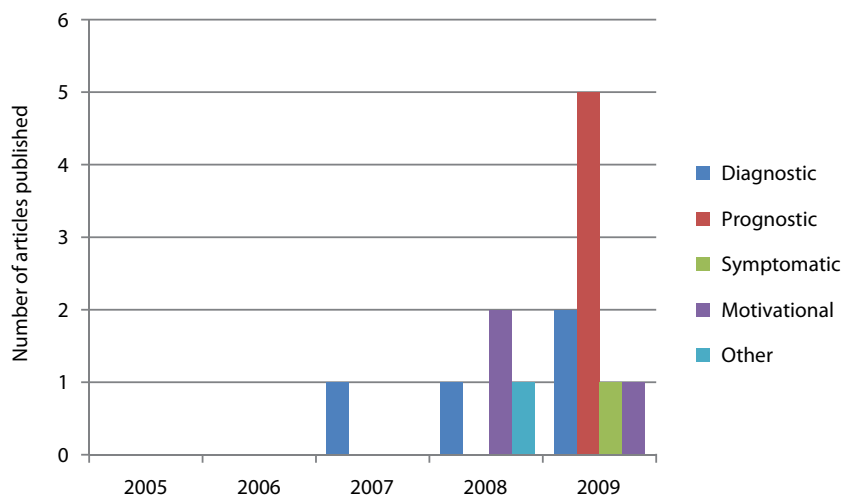
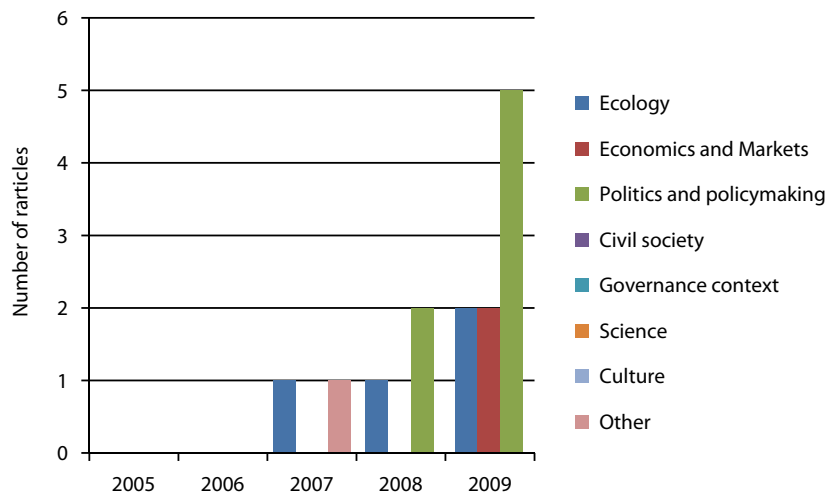


Figure 4. Breakdown of articles by type in the first frame

3 One of the articles was signed by the newspaper, the *Cameroon Tribune*.

4 Mrs. Cyrie Sendashonga





**Figure 5. Breakdown of the subject matter for primary perspectives**

Only 4 of the articles collected provide a second frame on emissions reduction related to deforestation and forest degradation. In other words, only these 4 provide more than one point of view on the subject.

We grouped the first frame in 4 categories and 'other'. Five articles are prognostic in nature; they describe one or more versions of the issues and a plan of attack, or strategy, to deal with a specific problem. Four articles are diagnostic; they attempt to identify the cause of a problem related to REDD+. Three of the articles are motivational; they go beyond the matter, its causes and consequences, and focus on other aspects, namely motivational and moral, that aims to convince the readership that they are affected by the process. Only one article collected was symptomatic in nature; it described the reasons and the consequences of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

*Le Messenger* interviewed CIFOR's regional coordinator for Central Africa. She was asked, what positions and discussions in the fight against climate change were relevant in Central Africa. She responded,

Central Africa ... supports the inclusion of the REDD mechanism in the new international scheme on climate change that will follow the Kyoto Protocol [...] Central Africa would like substantial and adequate funding to be used for capacity building so that it can fully participate, effectively and efficiently, in carbon markets and so that it can implement climate change adaptation programmes.

According to the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), in Central Africa, and specifically in the Congo River basin, forest policies have remained rather stable. In fact, since colonial times, the issue had been consigned to the private sector, and governed by logging and its corollaries (Karsenty *et al.* 2008). Today, various other fields are taken into account and influence forestry policies.

A breakdown of the articles by theme shows that four articles refer to forest ecology: Two delve into the conservation of forest ecosystems; one deals with deforestation and another with the improvement of carbon stocks. The articles point to the forest resources rich in surface area and biodiversity in Cameroon, and to the role these resources could play in the fight against climate change. Trees are described as a particularly important resource for CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration; additionally the release of carbon into the atmosphere due to deforestation is underscored. Other areas that are mentioned include endangered ecosystems (forests and mangroves) as well as the major causes of their deforestation and degradation. Whilst the major causes of deforestation and degradation mentioned are different for forest and mangroves, in both cases they are described as anthropogenic. Amongst the causes described are legal and illegal logging, the conversion of land for agricultural use (specifically mentioned are slash and burn, shifting cultivation, and the demographic boom).

The articles explain that the most endangered forests are located in the central, southern and eastern parts of the country. Mangroves are also under threat because of the encroachment of human activities into these ecological zones, particularly in the coastal regions near the city of Douala.

Half of the articles (7) looked at politics and policymaking. Of these seven, two of the articles gave attention to organisations and political debates. Five of the articles specifically looked at issues related to the consultation of stakeholders. Amongst these issues are the inclusion and participation of all stakeholders in matters related to policies, notably REDD+ policies, and the meetings organised by international organisations to discuss climate change policies with the aim to influence opinions and national public policies in relevant countries. State authorities in Cameroon are expected to redefine the concept of 'forest' to advocate for including REDD+ in any post-Kyoto agreement. Given that policy reforms underway are expected to influence discussions about the REDD+ process, even though they are not directly related, the fact that none of the articles under study mention the reforms is striking. This omission could be interpreted as avoiding the impact of these policy reforms on REDD+ plans.

Only two of the collected articles describe concerns about economics and markets; these articles looked at the process and mechanisms for financing efforts to mitigate climate change that REDD+ makes possible. The discussions focused on trading carbon credits from forests and the financing of REDD+. Financing is expected from developed countries. The principle put forward is that there are shared but differentiated responsibilities when it comes to the fight against climate change. According to this principle, developed countries pay developing countries for their efforts to protect their forest ecosystems as part of the fight against climate change. In addition to the question on where funds to sustain REDD+ would come from, there is also the question of just how substantial these funds are expected to be. If the financing provided is not commensurate with the stakes, the market will continue to bolster the hegemony that countries in the North have over those in the South, a new form of neo-colonialism of which African countries must be wary. If financing is not an incentive, African economies will better benefit by protecting their

options for action (economic, political, etc.) from 'predators' from the North.

Questions about governance, civil society, science and culture aspects of REDD+ are only addressed implicitly in the articles under study.

### 3.3. Level 3: Actors, discourses and counterdiscourses on REDD+ issue

The methods applied in the third level of analysis identify what kinds of institutions expressed opinions about REDD+ in the articles, and categorised those opinions within the context of the debate on REDD+ in Cameroon. Only 5 of 14 articles collected identify the relevant actors in a second frame.

We grouped the institutions into 5 categories (Figure 6). In the primary frames, the largest set of actors, 42.8%, are international research institutes, think tank, and learning institutions; they are mentioned in 7 articles. The 3 sets comprising intergovernmental organisations and similar entities; the State and public administration; and national research centres, think tanks, and learning institutions account for 14.2% of the actors mentioned; they are mentioned in 2 articles each. National NGOs and individuals each account for 7.1% of the actors; they are mentioned by only one article.

Table 4 provides information on the actors (advocates and adversaries) mentioned in the articles.

What is clearly evident is the total lack of REDD adversaries in the media, in both the first and second frames. In other words, no article collected includes discussions of different points of view on the REDD issue.

The number of times actors are specifically designated in the articles appears in Table 5.

The high visibility of CIFOR stands out, which is indicative of the leading role that this organisation has played in the debate on the REDD+ process in Cameroon. Other institutions are mentioned far less frequently.

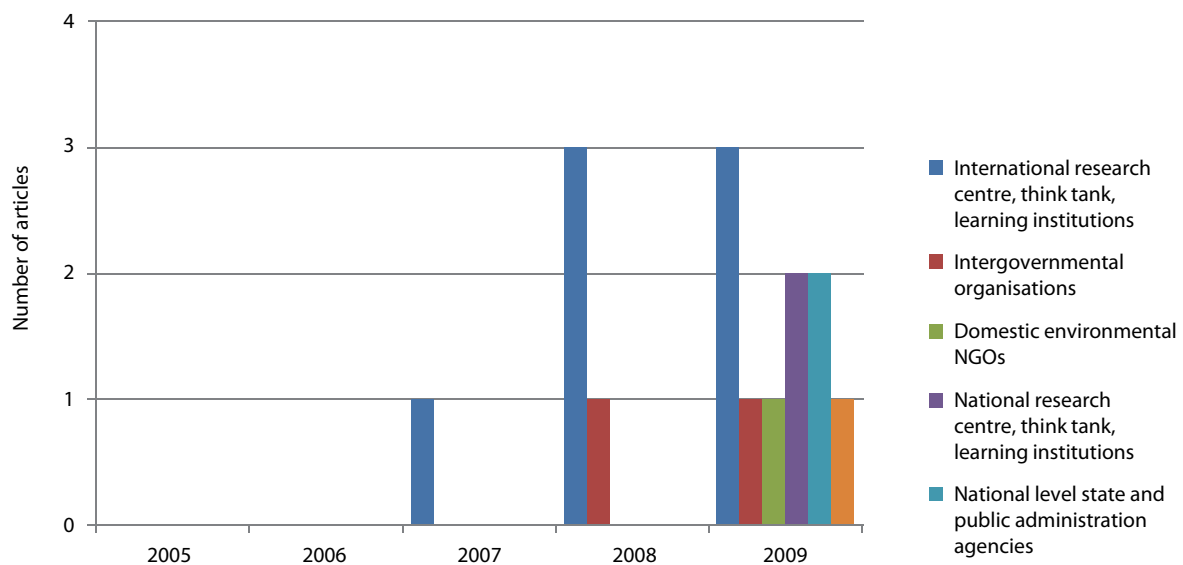


Figure 6. Breakdown of actors mentioned in the first frame

Table 4. Advocates and adversaries in both the cases on primary and secondary frames

Designation of the actors	Advocate F1	Detractor F1	Advocate F2	Detractor F2
NGOs or coalition of national environmental NGOs	1	0	0	0
Individuals	1	0	0	0
Intergovernmental organisations and entities	2	0	3	0
International research centres, think tanks, and learning institutions	6	0	0	0
The state and national bureaucracy	2	0	0	0
National research centres, think tanks, and learning institutions	2	0	1	0

National environmental NGOs are rarely mentioned in the media and seem to play a minor part in REDD+ discussions. The two NGOs that are being mentioned are national organisations headed by Cameroonians: the Centre for the Environment and Development (*Centre pour l'environnement et le développement - CED*) and the Action for Fair, Integrated and Sustainable Development (*Action pour un développement équitable, intégré et durable - ADEID*).

The actor mentioned most by the media is the president of the Republic, followed by the successive Cameroonian ministers for forests and wildlife.

Several individuals, often representatives of organisations, are identified in the articles as being actors in REDD+ in Cameroon. Cyrie Sendashonga and Guillaume Lescuyer are from CIFOR, Emmanuel

Table 5. International research institutes, think tanks and learning institutions

Designation	Number of mentions
CIFOR	6
SNV	1
ICRAF	1
FAO	1
CIRAD	1
Greenpeace	1

Table 6. National NGOs and environmental NGO coalitions

Designation	Number of mentions
CED	1
ADEID	1

**Table 7. The state and actors in national bureaucracy**

Designation	Number of mentions
President of the Republic/ heads of state	3
Ministers of Forests and Wildlife	2
Secretary General of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife	1
Parliamentarians	1
Elected local officials	1

**Table 8. Individuals**

Designation	Number of mentions
Cyrie Sendashonga	5
Guillaume Lescuyer	1
Emmanuel Bizot	1
Michel Takam	1
Makon Ma Pondi	1
Maurice Tsalefac	1
Louis Zapfack	1

Bizot was at the time Secretary General of COMIFAC, Michel Takam is from ADEID, Maurice Tsalefac, from the University of Yaoundé, and Louis Zapfack was a consultant for CED. The only individual who did not represent an organisation was Makon Ma Pondi, a journalist for the *Cameroon Tribune*.

Another striking observation is the strong presence of Sendashonga in the discussions; on several occasions the media identify her as being an essential actor. Moreover, she is the author of the only article entirely dedicated to avoided deforestation entitled ‘The Concept: “avoided deforestation”, a win-win formula for Central Africa and the Planet’, which appeared in the *Cameroon Tribune* on 6 December 2007.

**Table 9. National research institutes, think tanks, and learning institutions**

Designation	Number of mentions
IRAD	1
University of Yaoundé 1	2

In this category there is only one learning institution, the University of Yaoundé, and one specialised research institution, the Institute of Agricultural Research for Development (*Institut de recherche agricole pour le développement IRAD*), which specialises in agricultural issues. The university is represented by Maurice Tsalefac, from the School of Science.

**Table 10. Intergovernmental organisations**

Designation	Number of mentions
COMIFAC	5

Although it is the only intergovernmental organisation presented as an actor in REDD+ in Cameroon, the COMIFAC is frequently referred to in published articles. This illustrates the organisation’s participation in the debates on forestry and the choices to be made in the fight against climate change.

The table below illustrates how the actors’ perception of REDD+ evolved in Cameroon. The optimistic actors believe that REDD+ projects and policies will produce concrete and positive results. Pessimistic actors believe that REDD+ projects and policies will fail. Neutral actors believe that the advantages and disadvantages inherent to REDD+ projects and policies will balance each other out. Some actors provide no opinion on REDD+ (no views).

Figure 7 shows that optimistic views of REDD+ increased between 2007 and 2009, 57.1% of actors mentioned in 8 articles. In 2009, 5 articles expressed optimistic views on the future of the REDD+ process. A single article does not believe in the process and holds that there is no reason to plan for REDD+ projects. Well over a third of the actors, 5 articles, make no forecasts about the future of REDD+ in Cameroon and simply present the facts relevant to REDD+.

Figure 8 recasts this data to demonstrate which actors by type express which attitudes toward REDD+.

Figure 8 shows that all international research centres are optimistic with respect to the capability of REDD+ to produce significant results in Cameroon. The state and actors in the national bureaucracy and national NGOs are of the same opinion. The reservations expressed by national research centres, who see no future in the process, attract as much attention as the

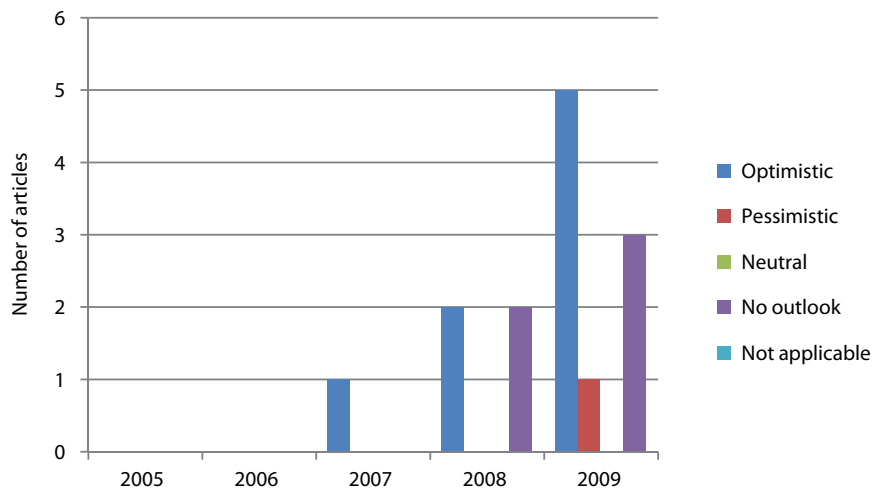


Figure 7. How views on REDD+ have evolved

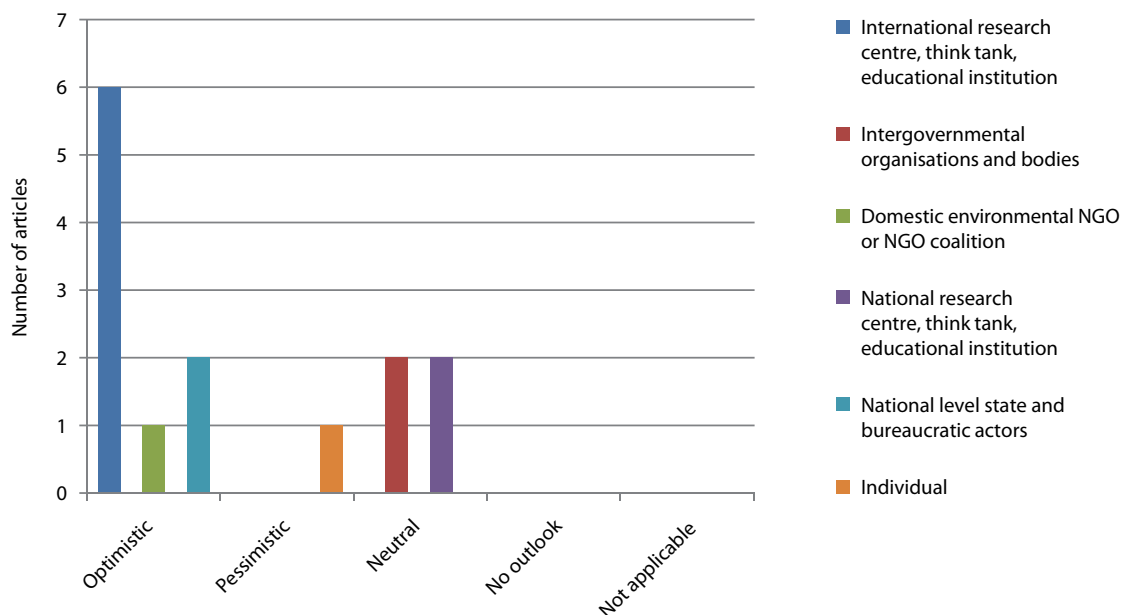


Figure 8. Positions held by diverse categories of actors on the future of REDD+

pessimism expressed by *Cameroon Tribune* journalist, Makon Ma Pondi, who believes that African states should look for ‘endogenous solutions’ to the climate change problem instead of wishing for, ‘a hypothetical REDD or Clim Dev Africa fund’.

Views on the future of REDD+ in Cameroon can be broken down by main subject matter of the articles, see Figure 9.

Figure 9 shows that the authors of 4 articles collected state that REDD+ will deal successfully with ecological issues, policy and policy-related processes.

Two articles that dealt with the ecology shared that view when it comes to the environmental impact of the REDD+ process. One of the 2 articles on the economy and markets are pessimistic, whilst the other articles do not express an opinion. In each of the subject matter categories there are articles that express no opinion on the future of REDD+.

Effectiveness and equity are the main concerns expressed in the articles. Each, taken separately, are covered by 4 of all articles published on REDD+. Efficiency is only dealt with in one article, and the same proportion covers discussions on areas other than the 3Es.

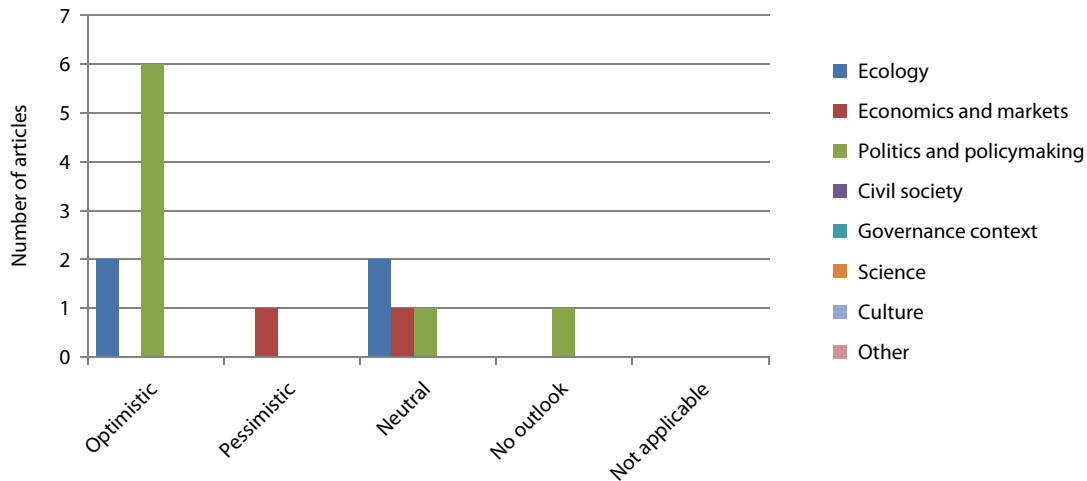


Figure 9. Views on the future of REDD+ by main subject matter discussed in the media

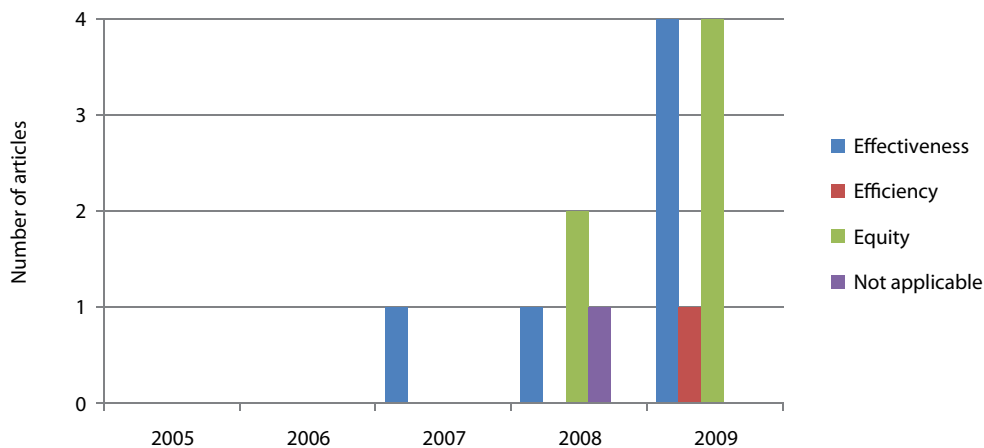


Figure 10. The 3Es in the articles

Discussions on equity deal with balanced trade between countries in the North and those in the South. The former are seen as causing pollution, whereas countries in Africa, specifically those in the Congo basin, are in 'an enviable position' because they have become indispensable partners in the fight against climate change. The authors express the opinion that African countries should not expose themselves to a fool's market. Makon ma Pondi said it was unacceptable for African countries to pay for the mistakes made by others, even though various actors involved in this new 'deal' are fighting to save the boat they are all on: planet Earth.

An analysis of how the 3Es are covered in the articles over a 3-year period shows that in 2007 only effectiveness was discussed in the single published article. The discussions centre on how capable REDD+ could be in reducing emissions and

improving carbon stocks. In 2008, the debate evolved and issues related to equity come into play. In 2008, one article deals with effectiveness, 2 with equity, and one with topics other than the 3Es. In 2009, however, all three Es are dealt with; 4 articles published in 2009 deal with effectiveness, one with efficiency, and four with equity.

International research centres looked at effectiveness (3), efficiency (1) and equity (1), as well as other REDD+ related issues (1). The COMIFAC, the only intergovernmental organisation identified, provided 2 separate contributions on REDD+ and equity in 2 articles published in the Cameroonian media. The state focused on effectiveness and equity, and gives the impression that time to discuss efficiency is yet to come; a tendency also observed with national research centres. On the whole, efficiency does not seem to be the object of discussions for

national actors, who are essentially concerned with the capability of REDD+ to produce the expected reductions and with taking into account equity-related issues. The costs of implementing the process does not seem to be the issue for national actors yet, as they grant greater importance to protecting the environment and defending their interests from other development partners involved in implementation.

Three of the articles that address ecological aspects focus on effectiveness and one deals with equity. Four of the articles on policies and policy-related processes delved more into equity-related issues, while 2 looked at effectiveness. Only 1 article, looking at policy and policy-related processes, dealt with efficiency.

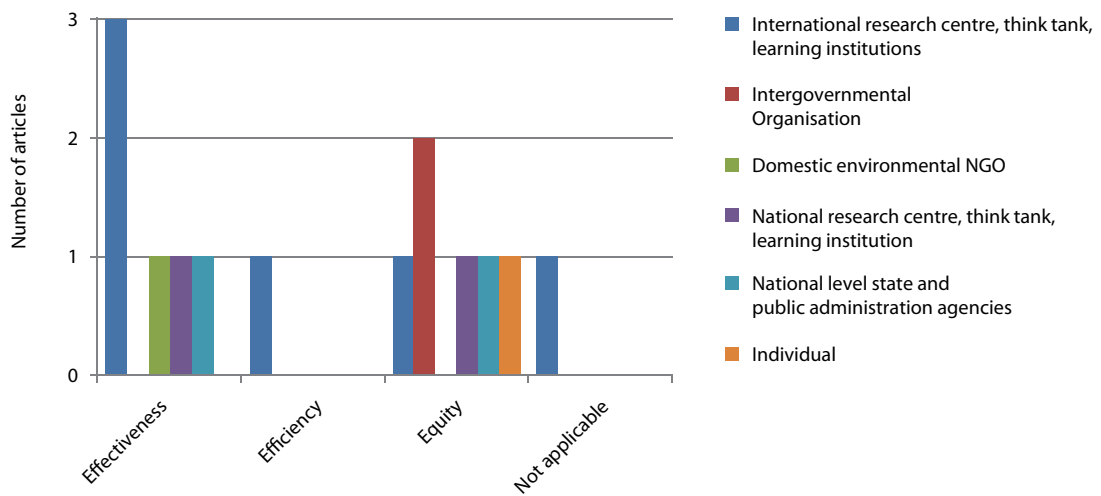


Figure 11. Coverage of 3Es broken down by actor category

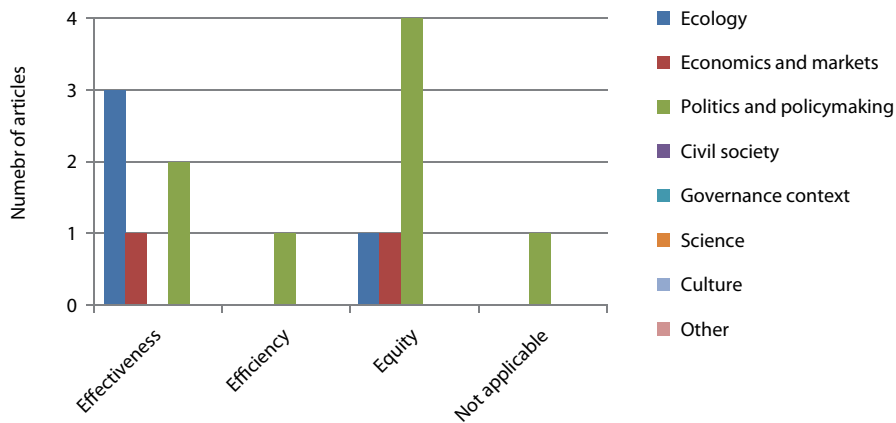


Figure 12. The 3Es broken down by subject matter

## 4. Discussion

Given the scant number of articles collected and journalists interviewed, the sample may not be representative of the opinions of the actors involved in the REDD+ process in Cameroon. The number of articles on the broader subject of forests and climate change appears to be much greater. However, the methodology applied was defined by the need for comparability with other country cases and this limited the number of articles collected on the subject. For example, articles published on forests and climate change that did not specifically use the term 'avoided deforestation', were not included.

However, the fact that only 14 articles were identified over a period of 5 years is indicative of the low amount of coverage given to avoided deforestation in the Cameroonian press. Even though the country does depend on natural resources such as wood, public discussion seems to focus on such topics as politics, sports and culture. Governance issues hold an important position in national discussions, specifically 'the fight against corruption' and many sectors are sometimes scrutinised through this prism.

Our analysis of discussions in the media on avoided deforestation generated questions on several specific issues. We review them below using the lens of effectiveness, efficiency, equity and co-benefits, a 3E+ perspective.

### 4.1. Putting the articles to the 3E+ test

We examined the findings using the 3E+ criteria to evaluate in more detail the considerations of the relevant actors in REDD+ in Cameroon. The 3E+ criteria are used to assess possible courses of action to mitigate climate change, and their expected outcomes (Stern 2008). In the case of REDD+, the 3Es were adapted to assess possible courses of action and results already obtained Angelsen and Wertz-Kanounnikoff 2009; Jagger *et al.* 2009 ).

In examining REDD+ in media discourse in Cameroon, we therefore looked for:

- factors that contribute to real emissions reduction (effectiveness);
- the capacity of funds raised to cover corresponding financial requirements (efficiency); and
- the acknowledgement of commitments relative to the fight against climate change and the fair distribution of costs and benefits (equity).

We will also look at the fact that the articles in the study did not address the co-benefits, the '+', of the 3E+ criteria.

#### 4.1.1. Effectiveness: The means to reduce emissions

Close your eyes. Imagine a world without forests, transformed into a burning and merciless desert. Or a world battered by raging seas, and unbridled oceans. And, the main victim of this disaster is Man.

After such an exercise, recommended by Emmanuel Etouke Ebouele in the article he wrote for the *Cameroon Tribune* on 11 November 2009, how could one not wonder about the effective execution of REDD+? Myth or reality, for now or for later, everyone is now interested in the subject and it calls for reflection.

Six articles in the study address the issue of effectiveness. They pose the question, can the mechanisms created help us reach the targets for greenhouse gas reduction and increased absorption? Effectiveness of REDD+ is based on the assumption that trees have a high potential to mitigate climate change. In his article published in *Le Messager* on 23 April 2008, Guillaume Lescuyer wrote,



As it grows a tree stocks carbon thus lowering the amount of carbon in the atmosphere; when a tree is felled, most of the wood rots and this releases carbon.

The six articles provide the usual statistics on emissions that occurred before REDD+ (20–25% of global carbon emissions); the rate of deforestation (13 million hectares per year, of which 1.49 took place in Central Africa, 0.42% in the Congo River basin). The articles' authors also say they want to see the process bring about concrete reductions in the negative effects of climate change.

Sendashonga wrote in an article published in the *Cameroon Tribune* on 6 December 2007,

The new element that REDD would introduce to the sustainable management of forests is that a country could decide to significantly reduce logging to favour carbon storage, under the condition that the loss of revenue is set off fairly by the funds the country would receive for putting carbon sinks at the disposal of all of humanity with a view to mitigate climate change.

The articles in the study bring to the fore the need to control illegal logging to avoid discrepancies between expected and realised emission reductions. However, as REDD+ is still in the policy drafting phase and has not been formally implemented in Cameroon, it is difficult to conduct comparisons to assess concrete emissions reductions. In fact, the few projects that do exist are still in the pilot phase, and none of the articles refers to them directly.

#### 4.1.2. Efficiency: The search for funds to finance emissions reduction

Efficiency, as defined for REDD+, measures to what extent reductions have been realised for the least cost. Only one article in the study refers to efficiency; it advises against investing in scenarios that significantly increase costs or risks (Brown *et al.* 2008). Sendashonga states:

In economic terms, the country involved [in REDD] does not lose anything, if carbon stocks and loss of revenue are calculated at a fair value.

In other words, if the valuations are conducted properly, in the end, one could expect the money

spent on implementing REDD+ in Cameroon to correspond to the lowest cost for a maximum result.

None of the costs of launching REDD+ projects, running them, compensating forest landowners or the like have been evaluated, which makes it difficult to talk about costs. Consequently, one easily understands why costs are not mentioned, except for their desired additionality. In the discussions, the subject does not seem to be a priority; it is only mentioned once in the articles. Notwithstanding, we know that the COMIFAC discussed what funds would be needed to implement REDD+ in the countries of the Congo River basin. Also, the question of compensating forest landowners is not dealt with, even though it is regularly brought up at meetings organised on REDD+ in the country.

#### 4.1.3. Equity: Financing REDD+ and respecting the countries and peoples of the Congo River basin

For journalists in Cameroon the question of equity for countries of the South in a scheme that is promoted by countries of the North is a central question. Six articles are devoted to issues related to equity, and the subject is mentioned four times as a secondary concern. It generates much interest. The concept of equity, for the purposes of this study, refers to the distribution of funds through REDD+ and the involvement of local and indigenous populations in REDD+ decision making. Discussions in the media focus on the equitable distribution of anticipated revenue. These discussions in Cameroon echo the skewed relations between countries of the North and the South. Zapfack from the University of Yaoundé 1, writes that Africa must insist on making, 'the financing of the project to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation of (REDD) substantial'. Sendashonga underscores the fact that success of REDD+ will depend on its capacity to guarantee equity. She explains,

It is first and foremost a question of equity, and I believe that developing countries, including Africa, are now well aware of their position and weight in these negotiations.

The articles include concerns about balanced distribution of costs that will be incurred. Funding must be substantial and should not reflect the

dominant position of developed countries over a weak Cameroon. Equity is synonymous with fair relations between polluting countries and African countries with forests that need protection.

According to Tsalefac from the University of Yaoundé 1, we need to keep in mind that,

...at the same time, it is Africa that pollutes the least, and that seems to have the remedy to curb the effects of climate change.

Apparently, the discussion of revenue distribution at the local level has not been the subject of any specific debate since the subject is recent and no funds exist to be distributed. However, concerns have been expressed on the subject. Sendashonga writes,

the segment of the population most exposed to the risks of climate change are women living in rural areas: communities living on the fringes of forests, including those described as native populations who live in and whose livelihood is the forest, but who do not equitably benefit from the economic repercussions of logging or who risk being further marginalised by the elite, once payments under the REDD system and/or payments for other environmental services are set up' (Le Messenger, no. 2996, 4 December 2009)

The proposal described is one whereby mechanisms for the redistribution of forest revenues at many levels (central and local governments and local communities) inform the creation of a new scheme that would take into account the new context and the lessons learned from past experiences and from research.

#### **4.1.4. Co-benefits: Understanding the absence of discussion on development, human rights and biodiversity**

Co-benefits are the good that comes from implementing REDD+ well. Given that between 2000 and 2007, the GDP growth rate attributed to forestry in Cameroon rose from 4.54% to 26.88%, a more than five times higher rate, it is difficult to fathom why issues such as development, poverty reduction, protection of biodiversity, human rights, and governance are not openly addressed in the course of discussion on forests and the fight against climate change.

Seminars and articles other than those in the study that address forests did discuss poverty reduction and the capacity of forests to generate additional revenue through increased logging and the development of non-timber forest products. Funds from the carbon market or from payments for environmental services could be used to build local capacity and to transfer technology that promotes the type of socio-economic development that would be deemed as fair compensation for halting deforestation. Tsalefac, in an article published in the *Cameroon Tribune* on 18 December 2009, asks an essential question,

Forests produce most of the means of subsistence for our people. The question is what will become of these people if we ask them to no longer use the forest. What forms of compensation are they going to be offered? ... This means that if we stop people from going into the forest for wood, we have to be able to offer something else that is going to enable them to survive.

Tsalefac continues,

And this something else will come from REDD funds. We also have to improve the woodstoves or manufacture solar panels. We still do not have the required technology. There is also the question of compensating engineers in the North so that they may benefit from the fruit of their research. The technology transfer funds should satisfy them.

The protection of biodiversity is only mentioned in the articles as a consequence of the conservation and preservation of the forest ecosystem; it is seen as an ancillary issue. Human rights are not directly referred to; Sendashonga alludes to human rights when discussing the management of anticipated conflicts over land so that individuals and forest communities are given the opportunity to exercise their right to development, despite the country's decision to preserve forest ecosystems. This is a normal response since logging contributes almost 6% of Cameroon's annual revenue. The effects of decentralised management of forest resources in Cameroon must be added. Forest resources are shared amongst the State (50%), local councils (40%), and riparian forest populations (10%). Two questions that REDD+ actors can pose is whether the process will be able to compensate for the loss of revenue, and whether it can generate reconversion economic activities for

the inhabitants who will have been deprived of forest resource use for their livelihoods.

## 4.2. State actors' absence from media discussions on REDD+: Strategic choice or lack of knowledge?

So far, state actors have rarely taken part in media discussions on avoided deforestation. They are only identified as actors in the REDD+ process in the country. The reasons for this perhaps lie in the limits imposed by the query methods used, in the failure of government to own the process, and in the insubstantial discussions amongst this category of actors. Avoided deforestation is a double-faceted issue: forests on the one hand and climate change on the other. The government in Cameroon is structured so that the Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection is in charge of issues related to environmental protection, whereas the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife is in charge of all forest management issues. This distribution of roles makes it difficult to coordinate processes such as REDD+, which require the engagement of at least those two ministries.

The absence of any other ministries such as finance, budget, agriculture, and mining in the discussions on REDD+, is also telling (Sonwa 2008). In fact, improved interministerial coordination could improve REDD+ effectiveness and increase its chances of success given that the government of Cameroon is highly divided into sectors. Greater coordination would also foment discussions and give voice to stakeholders who have refrained from expressing their opinions because they are not formally involved in REDD+ negotiations.

The ministry in charge of protecting nature appears to be more involved than the one in charge of forests, which is understandable since REDD+ is still seen as a way to protect nature and efforts to mitigate climate change. Many Cameroonians have yet to understand clearly the link between REDD+ and deforestation. This brings us back to the lack of REDD+ coordination in Cameroon. This lack has created a void: no one knows which of the two ministries should lead and move the process forward.

Lastly, when state actors are mentioned in the articles, they are frequently only a source of information and never an active contributor to discourse. Members of parliament have a formal forum for discussions called the Parliamentarian Network (REPAR), which is connected to a larger, pan-African network. But no REPAR members have discussed REDD+ with the media, which indicates that, although the discussions are elitist, state actors hold no common position on REDD+. State actors are, however, essential links for policies; it is their responsibility to vote on draft legislation or implement regulations by the government or by the body of which they are members.

## 4.3. Toward a targeted approach to media analysis in Central African countries: the discourse analysis

### 4.3.1. Pros and cons in the media discourse: No detractors or no debate?

We could have expected a large debate on the issues related to emissions reductions and the fight against deforestation. But this has not been the case.

The insubstantiality of debate in newspaper articles is perhaps due to the newness of the REDD+ process. Experts working for organisations and research institutes are part of the elite and are the only ones, for the time being, who have enough knowledge and know-how to have developed opinions. They are leading the discourse. Counterarguments from non-experts are rare, thus it is easy to understand the absence of detractors in discussions on REDD+ mechanisms. In most cases, the content of the articles is limited to introducing an event and describing what REDD+ is, but only in terms of causes and consequences. REDD+ is rarely critiqued. Likewise solutions or alternatives are rarely put forward, other than those already presented in national or international forums.

The newness of the subject also explains why the articles' sources of information on REDD+ are individuals involved in developing strategies to establish and implement REDD+ at all levels. These persons are seen, by the authors of the discussions in the media, as experts on the subjects of climate

change and deforestation. References cited include the Kyoto Protocol, the Bali Action Plan (which introduces the five practical phases to win the fight against climate change), and the Rio de Janeiro Conference.

#### **4.3.2. Need for comprehensive discourse research on forests and climate change in Cameroon**

If we do not limit ourselves to avoided deforestation, the discussions in the press in Cameroon on forests and climate change exist, are abundant and relevant. A review of the press shows that the authors are interested in equally important issues such as the fight against desertification, reforestation, the fight against deforestation, and illegal logging.

Thus media discourse in Cameroon is still a subset of the broader issue of efforts to mitigate climate change. A study of the broader issue may lead to better understanding of the reasons for the weak level of discussions on REDD+ in Cameroon.

#### **4.3.3. Why analyse discussions in Cameroon on broad issues such as forests and climate change?**

A parallel study on the discourse of actors in areas related to forestry and climate change would answer several questions: Is the absence of any real discussion on the REDD+ due to something else besides the lack of proficiency in the subject? Does this absence point to the concept that REDD+ is being disavowed in Cameroon? Or does it reflect the fear of political repression, which remains omnipresent despite the government's official discourse on the existence of freedom of the press in Cameroon?

# Conclusion

This analysis of media discourse on the REDD+ process in Cameroon shows that only a small number of articles, 14, dealt with the subject during the study period, December 2005 to December 2009. From zero articles published in 2005 and 2006, the number rose as the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference approached in December 2009. One article appeared in 2007, 4 in 2008 and 9 in 2009. This result was evidence of the growing interest of the forestry community as expectations from the Conference grew in the international community.

Although most articles collected were signed by journalists, judging by their contents the real authors seemed to be international organisations. The most popular themes are connected to policies and policy formulation, the ecological aspects of REDD+ and

questions about its effects on the economy and markets. This information indicates that REDD+ negotiators operate at supranational and state levels and that the debate is still at the international level. Interest has turned more to effectiveness and equity, which are sometimes seen as key points in the REDD+ system, while little concern is shown for the question of efficiency, perhaps because the question is recent. Silence about the question of co-benefits connected to REDD+ is puzzling since it is included in discussions elsewhere in workshops and other meetings. Thus, besides efforts needed to make reductions 'effective', assurances are needed that the costs, as yet unknown, will be 'efficient' and that the responsibility and revenues will be shared in an 'equitable' manner amongst REDD+ stakeholders.

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