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ENVIRONMENTAL LAW IN CAMEROON

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OVERVIEW OF KEY SCHOLARSHIPS

1. Achobang, C., S. Nguiffo, and B. Schwartz, “SG Sustainable Oils Cameroon Plc (SGSOC) in South West Cameroon” in Marcus Colchester and Sophie Chao (eds.), *Conflict or Consent? The oil palm sector at a crossroads* (FPP, Sawit Watch and TUK Indonesia, 2013).
2. Alden Wily, L., *Whose Land Is It? The Status of Customary Land Tenure in Cameroon* (Yaoundé: CED/FERN/Rainforest Foundation, 2011).
3. Alemagi, D., “The oil industry along the Atlantic coast of Cameroon: Assessing impacts and possible solutions” (2007) 32 *Resources Policy* 135-145.
4. Alemagi, D. , R. Hajjar, Z. Tchoundjeu, and R. Kozak, “Concession-Based F
“Cameroon’s Environmental Impact Assessment Decree and Public Participation in forestry: An Exploratory Assessment of Eight Forest-Dependent Communities” (2013) 6:10 *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 8-24
5. Assembe-Mvondoa, S., M. Brockhaus and G.Lescuyerc, “Assessment of the Effectiveness, Efficiency and Equity of Benefit-Sharing Schemes under Large-Scale Agriculture: Lessons from Land Fees in Cameroon” (2013) 25 *European Journal of Development Research* 641–656.
6. Bitondo, D., “Environmental assessment in Cameroon: state of the art” (2000) 18:1 *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*.
7. Kofele-Kale, N., “Asserting permanent sovereignty over ancestral lands: The Bakweri land litigations against Cameroon” (2007) 13:1 *Annual Survey of International & Comparative Law* 103–156.
8. Nsoh, W., “Ecosystem Services: A Possible New Approach in the Valuation of Compensation for Land Expropriation in Cameroon” (2013) 4 *IUCNAEL EJournal* 17-34
9. Oyono, P., J. Ribot, and A. Larson, “The Social and Organisational Roots of Ecological Uncertainties in Cameroon’s Forest Management Decentralisation Model”, (2004), 1 *European Journal of Development Research*.

10. Forton, O.T. *et al.*, “Land contamination risk management in Cameroon: A critical review of the existing policy framework” (2012) 29 Land Use Policy 750-760.
11. Tchoumba, B., *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and Poverty Reduction Strategies in Cameroon* (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2005).
12. Freudenthal, E., S. Nnah and J. Kenrick, *REDD and Rights in Cameroon: A review of the treatment of indigenous peoples and local communities in policies and projects* (Forest Peoples Programme, 2011).

BACKGROUND

Compared to many western nations, and like much of Africa, environmental governance is a recent practice in Cameroon. Sectoral legislations have been adopted to regulate different aspects of the environment in a piecemeal fashion. It was not until after the 1992 *U.N. Conference on Environment and Development*, which emphasized the need to apply a holistic approach to environmental management, that the *Law No. 94/01 of 20 January 1994* to lay down forestry, wildlife, and fisheries regulations and the *Law No 96/12 of 5th August 1996* relating to Environmental management (a framework law) were adopted. The framework law outlines the general legal framework for environmental management in Cameroon. This law is grounded on the principles of precaution, prevention and corrective action, pollute and pays responsibility, participation, and subsidiarity. It also prescribes environmental impact assessment (EIA) for all projects that can lead to environmental degradation in Cameroon.

There is reasonable number of research about environmental law in Cameroon, with some focusing on specific domains such as land contamination, oil pollution, environmental assessment, the rights of indigenous peoples, payments for ecosystem services, deforestation, and land-grabbing. These scholarly writings have deepened our understanding of, among others, Cameroon’s legal framework of public participation in environmental decision-making including: the *Law No. 98/015 of 14 July 1998* to regulate establishments classified as dangerous, unhygienic, and obnoxious; *Law No. 99/013 of 22 July 1999* which provides for EIAs and monitoring tools for restricting the adverse effects of petroleum activities on humanity and the environment; *Order No. 0069/MINEP of 8 March 2005* fixing the different categories of projects that require an environmental impact assessment; *Decree No. 2005/0577/PM of 23 February 2005* which summarizes the procedures for the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessments; *Decree No. 2008/064 of 4 February 2008* laying down the procedures for

administering the National Fund for the Environment and Sustainable Development; and *Decree 2013/0171/PM of 14 February 2013* laying down rules for conducting environmental and social impact studies.

In addition to contributing to environmental law scholarship in the African region, these articles have questioned how the legal and normative framework of public participation in environmental decision-making in Cameroon as informed by international law can be adjusted to provide tribal and indigenous peoples the ability to meaningfully participate in decision-making that affects their lives. A number of recommendations that can help address environmental threats and tap the environmental benefits related to natural resources development in Cameroon have equally been made.

1. **C. Achobang, S. Nguiffo, and B. Schwartz`**s inspiring treatise entitled, *SG Sustainable Oils Cameroon Plc (SGSOC) in South West Cameroon* had two major objectives: to examine the implementation of the right of indigenous peoples to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), in the context of the Herakles Farms investment in Cameroon; and to investigate the land agreement between the Government of Cameroon and Herakles Farms (Establishment Convention). The article highlights that the concept of FPIC is not expressly recognized in Cameroonian laws, even though the land regulations in Cameroon contain provisions recognizing and guaranteeing some community rights. According to the article, the 1994 Forestry Law gives rights to use the land and resources for the benefit of neighboring communities. The authors' perspective regarding legal recognition of FPIC in Cameroon is that Cameroonian laws and regulations are very weak, considering they refer to the terms 'consultation' and 'participation' instead of 'consent' of the affected communities. Such a legal deficit, to the authors, is detrimental to vulnerable communities and restraint the ability of the Government of Cameroon to accurately monitor compliance with legal requirements in this context.

According to the authors, Herakles Farms have been trying to seek a land concession in compliance with the country's regulations, and was indeed issued an authorization to fell trees by the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife on November 2012. The authors are of the

opinion that the right to fell trees cannot be allocated to an investor, in this case Herakles Farms, for a project which has not been permitted by the competent ministries—the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Cadastre and Lands. Therefore, the said authorization is not in compliance with the current laws and regulations governing forestry in Cameroon.

To anyone interested in examining how an investor's contractual rights and obligations can interfere with indigenous communities' rights to FPIC, this is the right article to read. It is also recommended to those interested in ...how a foreign investor can (1) terminate its treaty obligations or withdraw from membership in an intergovernmental organization in order to pursue its investment goals; (2) use an investment agreement, though illegal *ab initio*, to flagrantly violate domestic laws in a Third World country and disenfranchise Third World peoples.

2. **L. Alden Wily**, in his book, *Whose Land Is It? The Status of Customary Land Tenure in Cameroon*, sets out to review the forestry legislation of Cameroon in order to identify the legal status of customary land interests. According to the author, the failure of the Government of Cameroon to acknowledge customary land-holding, in addition to the difficulty for customary landowners to formally register their holdings to secure their property, has rendered rural Cameroonians deeply insecure in their land tenure. The report acknowledges that Cameroon's land legislation for its treatment of customary tenure is wanting in social and developmental respects, and constitutionally unsound. In particular the provisions of the *1994 Forest, Wildlife and Fisheries Regulations* in Cameroon have added significantly to the wrongful demise of customary land rights, and in unnecessary and patently rent-seeking ways, not least of which is designating the most valuable forest resources of its citizens as its own private property. The outcome also shows that sustainable forest conservation and management of use are also being affected.

The author highlights a need for legal change including: (1) the need for Cameroonian legislations to move beyond the focus of the farm in considering land rights to ensure that

important collectively held lands like marshlands, pastures, rangelands, forests and woodlands are integral to new acknowledgement of land rights; (2) the need to endow customary land rights with status as legal rights of property, and ensure they are given the same level of protection as lands held under introduced non-indigenous systems. This is a must-read article for those interested in advocating the human rights of forest-dependent communities. It is equally recommended to those interested in the substance of Cameroonian law and in building substantial comparative experience with land and forest developments elsewhere.

3. **D. Alemagi's *The oil industry along the Atlantic coast of Cameroon: Assessing impacts and possible solutions*** had two objectives: to assess the environmental implications of oil production for Cameroon's Atlantic coast; and to proffer recommendations for environmental stewardship in the country. The article started with an overview of the oil industry. It then went on to outline the impacts of oil production and the institutional and legal framework regulating the exploration, production, and marketing of crude oil in Cameroon. The article contends that the adoption of framework laws, especially the Law No. 98/015 with very general terms, makes it difficult for people living in communities of oil refineries, oil filling and service stations to be effectively protected from the activities of the oil industry. The author also identifies additional obstacles to cleaner production to include the fact that: public participation as a condition in the EIA process has not been adequately addressed; monitoring of pollutants is poor due to the absence of technical, human and financial resources; and also due to inadequate strategic environmental research pertaining to the oil industry in Cameroon.

In view of these, the author recommends that the Government of Cameroon enact specific laws to protect communities hosting oil refineries, filling stations, service stations and pipelines; the procurement of adequate resources (human, financial, technical) for monitoring industrial effluents by the government. It equally calls for the formation of research partnership with domestic universities so that research can be undertaken at an inexpensive rates; the abolition of gas flaring due to its adverse implications on host communities and their territories; and lastly, adoption of a new EIA legislation that would

adequately address the participation of local communities and the general public in decision-making that affects their land and resources.

4. The article by **D. Alemagi, D., R. Hajjar, Z. Tchoundjeu and R. Kozak's** entitled, *Cameroon's Environmental Impact Assessment Decree and Public Participation in Concession-Based Forestry: An Exploratory Assessment of Eight Forest-Dependent Communities* was a research project concerning eight forest-dependent communities in the Eyumojock and Mamfe subdivision in the South West Region of Cameroon. The underlying objectives of this treatise were to: ascertain the extent to which the communities perceive themselves to be engaged in the decision-making process regarding concession-based forestry, as defined by Cameroon's EIA Decree; assess public opinions on the role of the government in promoting public participation in concession-based forestry in the eight communities; identify public perceptions of the main obstacles affecting public participation in the communities under investigation; and propose policy recommendations for surmounting these obstacles.

In terms of respondents' experiences with public participation in forest management decision-making, 61% of the respondents noted that they have never been involved in forest management decision-making in their territories. As well, not more than 10% of the respondents in the case study area were aware of Cameroon's Environmental Impact Assessment Decree that mandates public participation in any forest decision-making process in Cameroon. The study also highlights respondents' perception of weak implementation of the decree by the Government of Cameroon, especially because of incompetent administrative personnel and insufficient infrastructural resources. The study recommends that the government encourages community empowerment through the translation of the EIA Decree and use of public media to communicate the Decree to illiterate communities. This study is the best suit for anyone interested in participating in the discourse on how to make concession-based investments more participatory and more beneficial, socially, culturally, economically, and environmentally, to indigenous communities in Cameroon. It is recommended for students and researchers interested in advocating public participation in forest management decision-making in Cameroon.

5. **S. Assembe-Mvondoa, M. Brockhaus, and G. Lescuyer's *Assessment of the Effectiveness, Efficiency and Equity of Benefit-Sharing Schemes under Large-Scale Agriculture: Lessons from Land Fees in Cameroon*** evaluates the mechanism of the distribution of land rent fees from agro-industry in Cameroon between the State, the local council and village communities as required by the provisions of Decree No. 76-166 of 27 April 1976 to establish the terms and conditions for the management of national lands in Cameroon. The study draws broad lessons that could be useful in designing REDD+ benefit-sharing mechanisms and combating rural poverty within a context marked by rising demand for farmland and the granting of mining permits in Cameroon. The article starts by summarizing the theoretical and legal bases of land rent in Cameroon. The study illustrates that land rent is payable to the State, councils and local communities when land allocated under a lease (foreign nationality) or as part of a concession (Cameroonian nationality) is located in the national domain.

The authors identified two contrasting scenarios that characterized Cameroon's land rent distribution mechanism: while Article 16 of Decree No. 76-166 provides that: 'The price to be paid by grantees of national lands shall insofar as necessary be fixed by a separate enactment', the enabling instrument is still to be enacted. The article concludes that the mechanism for land rent redistribution is ineffective, inefficient, and inequitable. To help reform the current system in Cameroon, the article recommends that the government complete existing regulatory provisions with an enabling statutory instrument that would fix the terms and price of institutional redistribution, use and monitoring and evaluation of land rent, avoiding bureaucratic channels that can induce transaction costs. The article proceeded to discussing the methodological considerations of the study. To be specific, five subsidiaries of multinationals operating in the agro-industrial sector in Cameroon were selected. Discussions and interviews were conducted with public authorities and local community members from communities located near the agro-industrial complexes (banana, rubber, sugarcane, and palm oil). Those interested in promoting fair compensation for customary land rights in Cameroon would find this article appealing.

6. In *Environmental Assessment in Cameroon: State of the Art*, **D. Bitondo** summarizes the evolution of the legal and institutional framework and assesses the practice of environmental assessment basing on the Mokong dam project and the Chad-Cameroon Oil and pipeline project in Cameroon. The paper started by noting the sectoral laws and rules governing environmental assessment in Cameroon before and after the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development. In the context of the EIA procedures of the Mokong dam project, the article shows that the Government of Cameroon “has put a hold on the project and accepted that it must look for alternative ways” to develop the area in question. The author maintains that an environmental impact assessment that is well imbedded in its context can result in conclusions that are appropriate and recognized by all parties. In terms of the Chad-Cameroon oil and pipeline project the author critiqued the developer for: failing to appropriately refer to the potential impact of the project on the national integrity and socio-political stability of Cameroon and Chad; its inability to make the affected communities feel its views could influence the final decision; being unable to allow the Ministry of the Environment to examine the EIA; arguing against a no-project alternative.

The author submits that EIA effectiveness in Cameroon is seemingly linked to stakeholders’ commitment, presence of a quantitatively and qualitatively adequate expertise with suitable logistics, the availability of dependable databases and a favorable socio-economic context. To improve environmental assessment in Cameroon, the article recommends that all actors, including government officials and institutions, linked to the EIA process should have a clear understanding of the procedure for implementing EIA, and should recognize EIA as a vital tool for decision-making relating to development activities. It further recommended that the involvement of public (including women, young people, and indigenous communities) in environmental assessment should cover the perspectives of the host communities, as well as the project’s planning, usefulness, and environmental effects. In sum, public involvement should focus on the local communities’ environmental knowledge.

7. In *Asserting permanent sovereignty over ancestral lands: The Bakweri land litigations against Cameroon*, N. Kofele-Kale emphasizes on the Bakweri (a community in the South West Region of Cameroon) land case against the Government of Cameroon. The Bakweri Land Claims Committee sought a declaration from the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights for violations of their rights to land and natural resources as defined in the *Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6 July 1974 to Establish Rules Governing Land Tenure* (as amended) in Cameroon and the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights* by a State-owned agro-industrial corporation (The Cameroon Development Corporation). The article questions whether an indigenous peoples seeking to reclaim and assert permanent sovereignty over inherited lands, forcibly expropriated from them by the colonial powers during the era of colonization and later passed on to the post-colonial State, should be obliged to comply with the exhaustion of local remedies rule in a nation where the “rule of law is in its infancy and where the judiciary” is neither independent nor unbiased.

The author contends that the exhaustion rule should be dispensed with where: it is apparently clear that domestic courts lack independence; there is a consistent and well-established line of precedents adverse to the plaintiff; and the respondent State lacks an adequate system of judicial protection that complainant can rely on. In sum, the author calls for a far-reaching interpretation of the exhaustion rule in order to: give both the defenseless citizen whose rights have been desecrated and the powerful State responsible for the desecration the same opportunities; safeguard the right of individual petition now ingrained in international human rights laws; and “give true meaning to the principle of equality of arms upon which all human rights contests are anchored”.

The language is comparatively simple and the article is suitable for those interested in the enforcement of the rights to natural resources in post-colonial States as well as those fascinated by issues of land expropriation without proper consultation or compensation as condemned by the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

8. **W. Nsoh's** article entitled *Ecosystem Services: A Possible New Approach in the Valuation of Compensation for Land Expropriation in Cameroon* aims to challenge the Cameroonian approach to providing compensation for the expropriation of land to secure its management in the interest of the public. The author started by introducing Cameroon's land tenure system: the three ordinances—Ordinance No. 74/1 of 6 July 1974 to establish rules governing land tenure; Ordinance No. 74/2 of 6 July 1974 to establish rules governing State Lands; and Ordinance No. 74/3 of 6 July 1974 concerning the procedure governing expropriation for a public purpose and the terms and conditions of compensation—that constitute Cameroon's legal framework for land governance.

A key feature of the Cameroonian approach, according to the author, is the limitation on who gets compensated and who does not for the loss of their interests in the land. The article illustrates that compensation for expropriation extends to “the value of crops, the value of ‘worthy’ buildings and other installations, the selling price of undeveloped land in urban areas and the cost of obtaining a land certificate for land that was held under customary tenure.” This system of valuing environmental resources, the author submits, “misses on occasion the value of land as providing livelihoods to others and benefits to the community as a whole.”

Equally arguing that customary rights remain part of the land tenure system in Cameroon, the author advises that valuation of ecosystem services should not be grounded strictly on the houses built or crops present on the land, or on the economic cost of acquiring a land certificate, as is presently the case in Cameroon. Additionally, expropriation proceedings should consider current and future ecosystem services, as well as any improvements that the customary owners and occupiers of the land would make to the land. In other words, present and future beneficiaries of the land should equally be considered as having legal rights entitling them to compensation. Drawing examples from the United States and South Africa where compensation may be calculated taking account of the value of ecosystem services and customary ownership, the author recommends that the Government adopts the compensation valuation approaches.

The article is simple to understand, and students interested in valuing, implementing and evaluating payments for ecosystem services in rural areas in Cameroon will find this article appealing.

9. **P. Oyono, J. Ribot, and A. Larson**, in *Green and Black Gold in Rural Cameroon: Natural Resources for Local Governance, Justice and Sustainability* examines the effects of local governance of oil compensation, or “black gold,” in forested rural areas affected by the Chad-Cameroon pipeline. Through the lens of four forest-dependent communities as case studies, the study questions how the decentralization of forest or financial management affects local governance in forest-based communities and what the outcomes in terms of local democracy, justice, social transformation, poverty reduction, and environmental sustainability are.

The results show that decentralizing the management of Cameroon’s forests has created favorable conditions for more effective local governance of forests and forest benefits. However, devolution of powers has been ineffective. The outcomes specifically include: (i) the weakness of local organizational and institutional arrangements involved in local governance; (ii) the shortcomings of environmental representation as established in rural Cameroon; (iii) the dependence of a poorly structured environmental representation on reciprocal and triangular relations with sub-national administrative corporatisms and regional elites, leading to elite capture and injustice; (iv) the weakness—and sometimes absence—of positive socioeconomic results at the village level; and (v) the presence of indices highlighting the fleeting nature of community forests, which were meant to be tools for fighting poverty and achieving sustainability, and heralding ecological risks in the wake of the Chad- Cameroon pipeline. The report recommends the Cameroon Government to: establish democratic local representation; redefine administrative oversight; clarify the role of NGOs; clarify the roles of the central government; establish public review processes; reinforce local capacities; and establish monitoring protocols.

This article will be appealing to those in support of democratic local governance and management of forests and related local financial benefits and revenue, and those interested in decision-making powers, especially in promoting the participation of local communities in environmental decision-making.

10. Using experiences and concepts from some industrialized nations of the world, **O. T. Forton, V. Manga, A. Tening** and **A. Asaah**'s *Land contamination risk management in Cameroon: A critical review of the existing policy framework* explores and presents some of the issues around land contamination in the city of Douala, Cameroon. The authors started with a critical review of the laws and statutory instruments relating to environmental management in Cameroon, with an emphasis on land contamination. The UK contaminated land policy framework was employed as a best case example to compare the existing policy on land contamination in Cameroon, in order to develop best practice approaches for improving the effective delivery of land contamination policy in Cameroon.

The article notes that although soil quality assessments in Cameroon are mostly undertaken within the context of agricultural production, very little information on soil-water is available in Cameroon. In essence, despite proof of land contamination in some parts of the country, there is very limited quantitative data on the status of land contamination in Cameroon. Hence, formulating and operationalizing a regulatory policy framework that will boost the characterization and efficient remediation of potentially contaminated land is of the essence. The article also contends that achieving sustainable land management in Cameroon seems challenging given that over half of the environmental policy instruments lack texts of implementation to transpose the objective of the framework laws. This is in addition to the absence of a harmonized approach to sustainable land management and ground contamination risk management: many different ministries and ministerial departments are involved with the management of environmental pollution. The article makes the following proposals: formulation of comprehensive and authoritative framework of legislation for land contamination risk management; stakeholder involvement and data gathering; as well as the creation of an

environmental protection agency in Cameroon that will supervise the development and operationalization of a land contamination risk management policy framework in the country.

This article is recommended for those interested in promoting public participation and involving local communities and other stakeholders in actively pinpointing and remediating contaminated land sites.

- 11.** The aim of **B. Tchoumba's** *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and Poverty Reduction Strategies in Cameroon* was to assess the extent to which the cultural specifications of indigenous and tribal peoples have been considered in poverty reduction efforts in Cameroon. The author started by describing the socio-economic situation of indigenous and tribal Cameroonians. It then went further to examine local strategies encouraging the consultation and participation of this group of Cameroonians in the country's poverty reduction efforts. The analysis was focused on the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the National Programme on Participatory Development, and the Forest-Environment Sectoral Programme in Cameroon. The study, which was conducted in line with the essential principles of the *1989 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO No. 169)*, adopted an approach that was participatory. To emphasis, the author grounded his methodology on the consultation of hundreds of indigenous and tribal peoples from 48 different communities and three indigenous peoples associations.

The study shows that indigenous and tribal Cameroonians are being marginalized and excluded from Cameroon's poverty reduction efforts. The article further notes that indigenous peoples, generally, are victims of human rights abuses because they: lack infrastructure and access to basic social services; suffer from poverty-induced illnesses; lack legal status or recognition; are excluded from sharing the benefits of their forest resources or participate in the development of their territory; live under threats of imminent expulsion; and lack land security. Indigenous and tribal peoples are not involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the poverty reduction strategies, the author argues, because such mechanisms were prepared without consulting indigenous and tribal

peoples. This has resulted in very limited consideration for their concerns, aspirations and their rights in initiatives to alleviate poverty in Cameroon. Given the absence of disaggregated data on the socio-economic situation of indigenous peoples, the author recommends that disaggregated data on indigenous and tribal Cameroonians be collected and incorporated into Cameroon's poverty reduction efforts.

This article is compulsory for those interested in alleviating rural poverty and promoting the recognition and respect of the customary land rights of indigenous Cameroonians.

12. E. Freudenthal, S. Nnah and J. Kenrick, in *REDD and Rights in Cameroon: A review of the treatment of indigenous peoples and local communities in policies and projects* review emerging national REDD policies and sub-national REDD initiatives in Cameroon, and the way rights and social issues are being addressed in these initiatives. The authors started by examining national-level REDD planning related to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) initiative in Cameroon before proceeding to reviewing sub-national REDD-related projects. The paper ended by highlighting some of the areas in which current and future REDD projects in Cameroon should adjust their practices and plans.

The authors argue that the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), among other national REDD readiness planning activities in Cameroon lack effective measures to guarantee the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities. In addition to the fact that the 9 sub-national REDD projects that were ongoing lack transparency, meaningful participation, and FPIC, these initiatives disregard land tenure issues, customary rights issues and benefit sharing issues. Even when some of the benefits reach local communities, the authors add, the funds are still often appropriated by the local elite as it is quite common for such funds to go to the Bantu farming groups, for instance, rather to indigenous forest peoples. The article further mentions that National REDD readiness planning linked to the FCPF in Cameroon has failed to: involve the effective participation of local and indigenous peoples; involve mechanisms and procedures to respect the right of indigenous peoples to FPIC; clearly define benefit sharing mechanisms; and clearly define the ownership of carbon.

The article recommends that a 'key starting point for REDD readiness in Cameroon should be the clarification of rights to carbon ownership, land, territories and other natural resources. To guarantee sustainable development and legality, REDD policies and actions at both national and sub-national levels must fully recognize and respect customary rights to land ownership in accordance with the obligations of Cameroon under international law. Reforms to recognize these and other rights would help to ensure that forest and climate schemes benefit indigenous peoples and local communities, rather than industrial logging companies, intermediaries and organizations involved in establishing and managing protected areas.

This article is recommended for those interested in promoting and ensuring effectiveness, efficiency and equity of REDD+ mechanism in Cameroon.