

CAMEROON'S ECOSYSTEMS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: Cameroon is a country, particularly rich in African ecosystems and consequently in biodiversity. One of the most striking features of the Cameroon biodiversity is its extraordinary diversity, estimated approximately to 10,000 plants species, 327 mammal species and diverse species of birds, fishes, amphibians, reptiles and insects. But the decline of this biodiversity is not limited to increased rates of threatened species, but includes losses in genetic and functional diversity across populations, communities, ecosystems, and landscapes. The most important decline in biodiversity results essentially from habitats fragmentation, modification and destruction, increased rates of invasive non-native species consciously or inadvertently introduced over-exploitation and other human-caused impacts. Meanwhile, ecosystems provide services that include provisioning of food, medicinal plants, building materials, spices, ornamental species, cosmetics, colorings, fiber and water; regulating services such as air, water and climate regulation, pollination and pest control; and providing resilience against natural disasters and hazards. Manifold environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA), biological studies and ethno biological surveys, conducted in various ecosystems of Cameroon have permitted to identify biological species and important services, impacts of the several activities of mankind on the biodiversity and several mitigations favorable for sustainable management of environmental diligences. Many challenges must be raised to reduce global change which is the rapid decline causes of the biodiversity and its uses in many ecosystems. Despite the challenges there is a hope that the future is promising. The Cameroon ecosystems are propitious to eco-tourism. 80 % of Cameroonians depend on biodiversity like in many tropical African countries. We have identified more than 1 000 species of medicinal plants in Cameroon. Many of them are both used for human and animal diseases. Several habitats can be reconstituted by abandoning them for long time or by reintroducing the local extricated species. By fighting against invasive species, climate changes, biodiversity erosion, bad agricultural practices, unlawful forest exploitation and the non-respect of forest law in Cameroon, we can guarantee the long functioning of Cameroon ecosystems for the welfare of the world.

Key words: Ecosystems and Biodiversity erosion, climate change, loss of species, reduction of ecosystems, conservancy strategies, Sustainable development, Cameroon.

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