



# ERuDeF

Conserving wildlife and protecting fragile environments

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Editorial

Volume 3, Issue 2

## CROSS RIVER GORILLA EXPEDITION: THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME

After receiving the same warm welcome from the staff at ERuDeF and an introduction to the workings of the organisation, our team of two volunteers and 3 staff piled into the truck to make our way to the Bechati Forest. While the roads are good for the first part of the journey no amount of warning can prepare you for the several hours of bouncing around the back seat as we negotiated our way through the rocky tracks and streams to arrive at our destination - the village of Bechati. Although the body is physically drained at the end of the trip, the mind is on overdrive. People smile and wave, children peer curiously around corners to see the white man, while some of the braver run alongside the truck yelling "Father, Father give me sweats". The landscape is largely made up of palms but as we draw closer to Bechati, the forest emerges in the distance and my anticipation increases.

The news of our arrival in Bechati spread quickly among the children, who made us feel like some sort of celebrity. Songs, games and dancing were shared through our attempts to speak a few words of pidgin english. The most notable impression I had of the children came from asking them "how many"? When they replied with their age being two to three years older than I had expected, the de-

gree of growth stunting from malnutrition hit me more than the runny noses and bloated bellies. However this soon disappeared as little hands led us around the mud-brick village with huge smiles on their faces.

Before we could enter the forest, our group had to seek permission from Bechati's chief in a drawn out ceremony of debate, palm wine, beer and laughter. The chief welcomed us into his village and the following morning gave his permission for our expedition into the forest. He asked the ancestors in the local dialect - "as they did not learn English when they went to school" - to watch over us in the forest and bring us back safely, sprinkling water from his traditional horn mug on the floor as he did so. It was time to enter the land of the gorillas!!!

We loaded ourselves up with our bags, Jen and I having the easier time of only having to carry our day packs, and began our slow ascent up to the camp. It was that first walk I found to be the most challenging, the sun was intense and the forest canopy cover minimal. Five minutes after setting off we were both swimming with sweat lasting the two hour walk to camp.

The stories that were shared meant we were not long without laughter, and we all became experts at playing cards under the moon and torch lights, while the forest sparkled around us as the fireflies went about their business. My only regret was not investing in a thicker bedmat as I felt every lump in the hard earth beneath us. The chimps and gorillas had one over me in the sleeping department and I was tempted to build my own leafy night nest to sleep in.

By Alison Wade  
(GVI Volunteer, New Zealand)

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## Great Apes Legislation Subject of Congressional Hearing

Rep. Miller's Great Apes Legislation subject of Congressional Hearing

Obama Administration strongly supports Miller Bill Wildlife groups call the bill "critical" to saving great apes from extinction

WASHINGTON, DC – The Obama Administration and several wildlife conservation groups today urged Congress to pass U.S. Rep. George Miller's (D- Martinez) legislation to reauthorize federal aid to help conserve great ape populations around the world.

Miller introduced the Great Ape Conservation Reauthorization Amendments Act of 2010, H.R. 4416, in early January to reauthorize federal funding for international conservation efforts of gorillas, chimpanzees, orangutans, bonobos, and other great apes. Miller's bill was the subject of a hearing today before the House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife.

"Great apes are our closest non-human relatives on the planet, but the threats they face from people are all too real," Miller said. "We have seen the devastation of wild primate populations throughout Africa and Asia. Since the authorization of my great ape bill ten years ago, our relatively small federal invest-

ment has been matched by significant local and private funding, boosting efforts to save gorillas and other great apes. We must reauthorize the program to enable these successful programs to flourish."

"The Great Ape Conservation Act provides an excellent example of how to produce focused and efficient means to support the conservation of species that are ecologically important and aesthetically invaluable to the American public and people around the world," said Jane Lyder, the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior in her testimony before the Congressional panel. "The Administration strongly supports H.R. 4416."

Regarding the Great Ape Conservation Act, Sally Jewell Coxe, the President of the Bonobo Conservation Initiative said in her testimony: "I can't imagine what we would have done without it or what the prospects would be today for bonobos and the other great apes had it not been for the critical, catalytic, and timely support GACA has provided ... Without intensified efforts to protect them, great apes including bonobos may be extinct in the wild in a generation. The Great Ape Conservation Act is critical to prevent this tragedy. "

Miller authored the original legislation in 2000 to provide federal funding through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for international great ape habitat conservation efforts, primarily in Africa and Asia.

The FWS Great Ape Conservation Fund has provided millions of dollars in federal matching grants to protect rare and threatened primates – including gorillas, chimpanzees, orangutans, bonobos, and other great apes. In 2009, the FWS awarded funds to 59 projects, many in African and Asian nations. Over \$4.2 million was granted by the FWS, leveraging and additional \$4.9 million from other organizations.

Miller is a long-time animal rights and conservation advocate and a leader in Congress on education, labor, the economy, and the environment. Miller is also the author of the Protect America's Wildlife Act (PAW Act), legislation to protect wolves and other wildlife from the illegal and inhumane practice of airborne hunting.

[Curled from the Great Ape Alliance news](#)

## Journalists Trained on Sustainable Forest Management

**O**VER a dozen journalists from public and private media organs in Douala were recently schooled on Sustainable Forest Management and Certification.

This was during a day's workshop organized by the World Wide fund for Nature through the Central Africa Regional Programme of WWF's Global Forest Trade Network, GFTN.

The objective of the workshop, according to the organizers, was to build the capacities of media practitioners for the promotion of the responsible forestry in Cameroon through strategic communication.

The journalists were trained on the certification system and requirements and procedures applied by the Forest Stewardship council, FSC.

The FSC is the lone institution in Cameroon that supervises companies involved in the exploitation of forest products.

The director of FSC Cameroon, Parfait Mimbin Esono, explained that certification is out to ensure the sustainable management of the forest in accordance with internationally accepted norms.

According to him, a timber company that has been certified will easily find a market for its products abroad because certification gives the company a good image in the international market.

10 Certified Companies in Cameroon

He noted that there are quite a number of conditions for certification, which aim to protect the interest of the indigenous communities of forest areas and the workers of logging companies.

He said that FSC constantly monitors the activities of companies that have attained certification to ensure that they do not act dishonestly.

The FSC Cameroon Director disclosed that, so far, there are only 10

certified timber companies in Cameroon. Esono regretted that certification is not yet an obligation in Cameroon, thus timber companies may decide whether or not to get certification.

Meanwhile, a senior official in the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife sensitized the media practitioners on the country's forestry Law and a number of related conventions signed by the Cameroon Government.

The communication Officer of WWF Cameroon, Charles Tayo, wrapped up the presentations with a paper on the current and potential role of the media in the promotion of responsible forestry.

On their part, the media practitioners urged the WWF officials to organize more of such seminars, especially with regards to forestry management.

**JOE DINGA PEFOK (CULLED FROM THE POST)**

## Women, Traditional Rulers Rally Against Climate Change

**T**RADITIONAL rulers and the women folk of the villages of Taku, Tallah, Ngarum, Ntundip, LU, Mbah and their environs have unanimously resolved to take up the challenge of fighting against the influences of climate change.

The resolution was arrived at recently in Taku village in Ndu Sub-Division at a grassroots forum on biodiversity and climate change; rural women in the face of global warming in a post-copenhagen era, organized by the coordinator of the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance, PACJA, Augustine Njamshi in collaboration with the Executive President of the Pan-Africa Parliamentarians Network on Climate Change, PAPANCC, Hon. Cyprian Awudu Mbaya.

In his welcome speech, the Fon of Taku regretted

that of late the people had indulged in activities that destroyed rich green forests and rampant bushfires (sic)

DO Ndu, John Nico, joined the Fon in condemning those human activities that affect biodiversity and influence negatively climate change. He cautioned the population especially the women folk, to carry out their activities within the ambit of environmental law and promised hard times to those who will be caught in those harmful activities.

A presentation by Njamshi on biodiversity and climate change vis- a- vis the rural world accompanied by the projection of pictures, exposed participants to the hazardous effects of climate change that were already imposing tough times like scarcity of water as streams were getting drier

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everyday; scarcity of rainfall which besides its effects on crop production, poses unbearable heat that brings along diseases, and the fast reduction in the availability of forest products that were hitherto sources of income. All these, he said, were the results of daily forest destruction, rampant bush burning and poor farming methods.

Awudu Mbaya, on his part, painted a gloomier picture of climate change.

To him, if the locals could join their hands together, they could easily fight and eradicate this phenomenon.

Other speakers included Mrs. Esther of Taku Health Centre, who talked on climate change and health; Mrs. Mary Awudu, who dwelt on discussions and sharing of experiences on the untold effects of climate change, Mrs. Confidence Njamshi, Hon. Esther Ngala, MP for Ndu and the President of Women's Empowerment Group Taku.

The participants resolved to protect their forests from wanton destruction; to plant new species of trees and cut down the unfriendly eucalyptus specie; to protect their water catchment areas with shade and water friendly trees; to indulge in less harmful farming methods; to function within the ambit of the environmental law No 96/12 of August 5, 1996 and to jealously support all government policies on environmental protection and climate change.

**By Wamey Panky (Curled from The post)**

**Farm Work, No Longer for the Illiterate and Old**

**"Agriculture is no longer for the frustrated", "anyone who is a farmer and proud to be, does not depend on anyone else or anything for a living".**

**C**AMEROON is a purely agricultural society, but, farm work is a task that has been abandoned for the illiterate and the old. Very few people who have been to schools think that they can take their knowhow back to the farm and do farming in a new way.

Long time ago, when the Green Revolution was launched in the country, farmers were given incentive to work and their produce was exhibited at agricultural shows. Today, very little is heard of these shows, agriculture is not encouraged in any way.

**Meet Dorothy F.M. Ebako**

Monday, February 16, 2010, I had the opportunity to meet and chat or just listen to this woman. "Agriculture is no longer for the frustrated", "anyone who is a farmer and proud to be, does not depend on anyone else or anything for a living". She says.

When this tall bulky Bafaw woman meets you, she asks, 'are you working with TTF?' she does not even wait for a reply, she says "I am Mami Ebako" seemingly expecting that everyone working with TREES Cameroon should know her.

Interestingly there is more to this woman than meets the eye. Popularly known as Mami Ebako, she is Dorothy F.M. Ebako and runs a non-profit known as Christian Charity. She is actively involved in planting trees and causing others to plant them. She chatters quite much but when you listen, you find that she has quite much to put through.

Listening to Mami Ebako talk the way she does, one feels that most of us could joyfully go back, not necessarily to tilling the soil but take up alternative means of farming.

**Snail Farming**

Mami Ebako says she has been into this business since 2000, ten good years of 'snailing'. It is a good business, and everything is sold. The slimy substance which most people abhor is in high demand. Women use it for maquillage. The problem she faces is how to preserve it. This is to say that every part of the snail is valuable and marketable. She proudly states that her snail farming took her to the capital city Yaoundé for small and medium size enterprise exhibition. A kilogramme of snails was and is sold for FCFA 15.000.

Mami Ebako is eager to show her

maize too. She has made great progress in producing corn in marketable quantities, and she proudly shows us her threshing machine, which she obtained after selling snails. "This is operated using petrol or manually, when you put the corn here, it separates it from the stalk and when you put it here it willows the corn." This, she says, while pointing to us, the different parts where the corn is put.

She is a happy woman. She does what she does with a smile and hopes for the best, because when someone complains about snails dying she is quick to point out, "when one snail dies, it's really no story, continue with the rest and hunt for more".

In an age where there is a need for sustainable and secured livelihoods and when people have to be encouraged to keep off the forests, conserve wildlife and use other methods of farming, the charismatic and enthusiastic zest of this woman is the sign we need. This example provides us with opportunity to try something else and overcome poverty.

**By ITA NAWOM**

## Getting Children Involved In Tree Planting

**E**ach day the world loses about 125 square miles (200km<sup>2</sup>) of its forest, leading to the loss of 34.5 million acres (14 million hectares) every year. Most of this takes place in the developing communities of the humid tropics. Reforestation efforts are limited only to about 10% of this and most of these efforts are short lived. **(TFTF Agro-forestry training manual)**. Because countries are struggling to live with changing times, every year an equivalent of 40 billion tons of carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere because of increased use of fossil fuels. As a result of this our environment is in great danger, it is contaminated, deteriorating and therefore must be protected or controlled.

To ensure that the future generations grow up with this understanding and attitudes that will revert the destructive influence on the environment caused by the present day citizens and their activities, it is important to equip children at all levels with the knowledge and understanding of the ways human activities affect the environment.

To achieve this, TREES Cameroon is launching the TREE PALs Program in some five pilot schools in the South West Region of the western Cameroon highlands. This program is one that has as component; environmental education in schools, tree

planting in schools and letter exchange between students in the US and their corresponding classes back here in Cameroon. This will enable students understand global issues not only limited to the environment but including aspects of culture, and human behavior around the world.

As part of the program, environmental curricula will be developed together with the teachers based on the needs of the schools involved. Students will be expected to plant trees for either soil fertility improvements, shade production around play grounds or for a fence.

BY NEBA KINGSLEY

## International Volunteers Give Hope to Orphan in Bechati

**T**HE inability of some families in the Lebialem Mone Landscape to consume up to a dollar per day is no news to anyone that has ever visited communities surrounding the block.



Fees acknowledgement receipt by orphan

The area is predominantly characterized by polygamous marriages accompanied by increased family size of 24 per household. Education is regarded

as a wasteful investment as parents would rather send off their girl children for early marriage to obtain immediate cash. Girls are forced into marriages to men old enough (65+) to be their fathers.

This inhumane practice have left most children orphans as their parents give up the ghost a few years after these children are born. The child equally faces a number of challenges, including finding money for school fees, food, clothing, and access to basic healthcare.

One of such victims is Tanga Hilton Adam, a 10year old Class Six Pupil at Government Primary School, Bechati. He is the eldest from a family of 5. The mother is alive but being a victim of an

early marriage, she cannot afford his son's school needs. The boy being very intelligent but disadvantaged by circumstance had already lost all hope of ever writ-



Payment of fees: orphan, his aunt and head teacher 2009

ing the competitive Common Entrance and FSLC Examinations. He won a ticket to this life transforming examination when he performed brilliantly to the questions forwarded by ERuDeF's International Gorilla Volunteers.

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After a brief interview with the head teacher about this pupil, it became clear that, he is one of the most intelligent but disfavored by circumstances. Being the only pupil that had not paid in his registration fees of 21,500 FRS. The volunteers, shocked by

the situation contributed the sum and paid to the head teacher. The initiative is quite unique and it stands the test of providing light to many more orphans and vulnerable children in the area.

**BY ASONG GLADYS**

## **Relevance of Monitoring Cross River Gorilla Population in Bechati-Fossimondi-Besali Forest**

**E**RuDeF's recent institution of the on-going constant monitoring of Cross River gorilla (*gorilla gorilla diehli*) population in the Bechati-Fossimondi-Besali forest aims at resolving a handful of challenges associated with the conservation of Cross River gorillas in the Bechati-Fossimondi-Besali forest in particular and other Cross River gorilla discrete locations in general.

Many Cross River gorilla populations with emphasis on the newly discovered Bechati-Fossimondi-Besali Cross River gorilla live outside protected areas, where they are still highly susceptible to poaching. They appear to be one of the smallest and rarest population of all the four gorilla subspecies and the least studied of all the gorilla subspecies in terms of their ecology. Their limited population size, the threats they face in their habitat; high poaching rates, forest encroachment for agricultural practices, coupled with their slow reproductive rates pose serious problems to their conservation and this partly accounts for why just a handful of sightings have been made on the Cross River gorillas.

With the implementation of a constant bio-monitoring of these gorillas in the Bechati-Fossimondi-Besali forest whose small population still face enormous threats from the adjacent communities; a reduction in the rate of poaching on this subspecies of gorillas and forest encroachment by forest adjacent communities, increased population viability of this subspecies, improved knowledge and understanding of the ecology of this subspecies of gorillas and a gradual introduction of eco-tourism to support sustainable livelihood practices by the local forest adjacent communities constitute key expectations to be realized from the bio-monitoring exercise.



**By Alongamoh N. Edwin**

## CLIMATE CHANGE: What is Your Knowledge?

**E**VER heard of climate change? Most probably yes! If not you should have at least noticed an uncomfortable heat, especially during the dry season for a couple of years now. We call it "global warming".

Climate change has been at the center of many international conferences like the last December 2009 conference in Copenhagen.

It is the change in average weather over time and over a region. It includes changes in temperature, wind patterns and precipitation. Climate change is one of the greatest environmental, social and economic threats facing the planet today.

Climate has and will always vary from natural resources. However, human activities are increasing significantly the concentration of some gases in the atmosphere, such as green houses gases (mainly CO<sub>2</sub>) which tend to warm the earth

surface, and anthropogenic aerosols which mostly tend to cool it.

Scientists project for the next century that without specific policy changes:

- Global mean temperature should increase by between 1.4 and 5.8 degree Celsius (2.5-10 degree far & height)
- The Northern Hemisphere cover should decrease further but the Antarctic ice sheet should increase.
- The sea level should rise by between 9 and 88cm (3.5" to 35").
- Other changes should occur including an increase in some extreme weather events. What ever the case we have to know that the consequences of climate change are devastating.

Regional changes in climate, particularly increase in temperature have already affected some physical and biological systems. Both natural and human systems are vulnerable to climate change

because of their limited adaptive capacity. This vulnerability varies with geographic location, time, social, economic and environmental conditions. Some extreme weather events, the damage, hardship and death they cause are projected to increase with global warming. There is also a potential for large-scale and possibly irreversible impacts which pose risks that have yet to be reliably quantified; their likelihood is probably very low but is expected to increase with the rate, magnitude, and duration of change. Man will have to adapt to and cope with climate change consequences that are not prevented by mitigation. Economic losses can be expected, especially in poorest regions; the higher the warming the greater the losses. Promoting adaptation, sustainable development and equity can be mutually reinforcing.

**BY TAMABANG DIDACUS**

## Inspiring Green Economy And Being Clean

**L**EBIALEM Mone Forest is ERuDeF's basic priority. This area is dedicated to the protection of biodiversity and natural resources. It is also important to note that protected areas have many values.

Apart from conserving biodiversity and natural resources, they equally protect watersheds, ameliorate local climate change, serve as a zone for tourism, act as a local carbon sink, and provide natural products and sites for research. Finally, they can lead to an important develop-

ment function which can benefit the indigenous inhabitants, neighboring areas and the world at large.

Mitigating climate change through black carbon reduction and through re-forestation or aforestation is part of ERuDeF's concern. The key issues here are; replacing the use of charcoal and firewood for traditional cooking to modern cooking stoves, promote the planting of trees, implement alternative source of energy and promoting biodiversity conservation and

poverty alleviation.

This will go a long way to benefit the local people and the natural resources or biological resources. The local people will receive training on how to manage their natural resources and environment. We will go further to assess climate change related disasters and stresses affecting the inhabitants, carry out sensitization campaigns, organize workshops and seminars, create environmental clubs in schools

All this knowledge impacted on the community will go a long way to empower them thus improving their lot. It will not be surprising if their willingness to participate in the various environmental activities should increase.

This will further lead to the creation of carbon sink. With this, the inhabitants will always be prepared for the current and future climate change related disasters and stresses.

What is also important here is that, all information about climate change issues will be broadcast through the media. We also have to understand that climate change is related to all aspects of our life. In this light, we need to respect people, communities and our environments if we hope to secure a clean and green future. Together Let us fight global warming to avoid drastic effects of global warming.

**BY PAYONG MARQUISE**

## The Role Of Building Capacities In Climate Change Mitigation

Several studies in recent times have revealed that human activities of the past and present have contributed greatly to several environmental hazards.

One of the major effects which is faced today is climate change. It has been demonstrated today through its returning effects on other global living aspects and humans in particular. These include diseases especially and negative effects on agriculture. The change in climate has been quoted to have drastically affected agricultural output rates in Africa especially and of the world in general.

The negative effects of climate change on crop production are especially pronounced in Sub-Saharan Africa, as the agriculture sector accounts for a large share of GDP, export earnings, and employment in most African countries.

Furthermore, a majority of the poor reside in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their survival. African countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change because of their dependence on rain fed agriculture, high levels of poverty, low levels of human and physical capital, and poor infrastructure.

We need to understand here that more than 70% of the change in climate has been caused by the human race either directly or indirectly.

The argument regarding the latter statement has always been that the western countries have been responsible for the change to a greater extent (highly mechanised economy). Yet Africa stands to suffer the most because they lack the necessary facilities to combat this increasing warming of the earth.

Yet the united nations now calls on everyone especially Africa to contribute to the fight against the change through reduced deforestation and air pol-

lution activities. Building capacities of global populations especially local communities on the need to revise forest fragmentation activities especially and local agricultural technologies is believed to be a giant step. The capacities of the corporate sector which has demonstrated up scaling responsibilities to drastic changes in climate the world over also needs to be built.

**BY ATEM BARRY**

## Restoring Degraded Lands and Increasing Food Production through Tree Planting

Trees are essential for the restoration of degraded lands. Trees for the Future is working with local partners to promote tree planting that will supplement erosion control from terraces and provide food, fodder, timber and green fertilizer to improve food security. It will equally increase household income and hopefully decrease negative grazing practices. People are usually concerned about where their next meal will come from; Trees for the Future is currently focusing on training, establishment of nurseries, and distribution of nursery tools. Through agroforestry, a system of agriculture that combines crops, animals, and trees, can meet both short- and long-term food production goals. People will gain hands on experience, gain the tools to create sustainable, ecologically based agricultural practices.

Trees for the Future provides tree seeds and training on how to establish tree nurseries. TREES Cameroon will undertake a series of workshops in the coming weeks with farmers that will sensitize the farmers on the importance of planting trees and how to incorporate trees into their farming methods.

**BY MEFOR HALLE**

## WaterSmart Innovations Conference & Expo October 6-8, 2010 Las Vegas, Nevada

Water-efficiency professionals from across the United States and around the world combined to submit 267 papers for consideration as presentations and panel discussions at the WaterSmart Innovations Conference and Exposition. The number is a record for the conference, now heading into its third year.

## The 2010 Student Conference On Conservation Science

The eleventh conference will be held from [23 - 25 March 2010](#), in the Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge, UK.

The **Student Conference on Conservation Science** is the only international conference aimed entirely at students. It helps young conservation scientists gain experience, learn new ideas and make contacts that will be valuable for their future careers. Over the past 10 years, we have hosted over 1,600 delegates from 106 countries worldwide.

This newsletter is financially supported by



In addition to the abstracts from 24 states and the District of Columbia, WSI received proposals from professionals in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Ghana, India, Japan and Singapore.

Candidates chosen as presenters will be notified by e-mail and postal mail no later than Friday, March 12, 2010.

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