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# Convention on Biological Diversity Post 2020 Target: A Critical Analyses of the Threat Posed by 30 X 30 Target, Devoid of a Human Rights Approach Towards Conservation to Land Rights in Developing Countries: Case Study Cameroon

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## ABSTRACT

In a bid to protect the country's biodiversity, the government of Cameroon became party to the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, the convention's recent post 2020 and its 30 by 30 target which is aimed at designating 30% of earth's land and Oceans has caused a lot of controversy amongst human rights advocates because of the threat it poses to indigenous land rights and has been welcomed by conservationist because of the potential it has towards the protection of biodiversity. This study was conducted to address the threat posed by the Convention on Biological Diversity and its 30 by 30 target to land rights of indigenous and traditional communities in Cameroon. The study used qualitative data analysis to arrive at the findings. Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity post 2020 and its 30 by 30 target will further increase the land rights violation of indigenous communities in a country that already has a history of violating the land rights of indigenous communities. In order to ensure that the implementation of the Convention on biological diversity post 2020 and its 30 by 30 targets don't violate the land rights of indigenous and traditional communities in Cameroon, the state must adopt a human rights-based approach towards conservation and also ensure that indigenous communities are not left out in the decision-making process in decisions that affects them directly

## INTRODUCTION

Cameroon has lost a significant portion of its flora and fauna due to commercial logging, mining, agriculture and infrastructural development, which manifest the country's vision 2035 of becoming an emergent nation and bad governance. To protect this Flora and Fauna, the government of Cameroon has joined an international effort to protect Biodiversity from the existential threats it is currently facing. In the year 1995, the government ratified the Convention on Biological diversity and some of its subsequent protocols. The government even went ahead to implement certain measures for the protection of biodiversity although Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) still remain unprotected which as a result of lapses in biodiversity conservation on the part of the state. The state has always paid little attention to the significant role played by indigenous communities in the decision-making process with regards to biodiversity conservation and the negative effects of these decisions are often felt mostly by indigenous communities which sometimes creates a conflict between Conservation of Biological Diversity and indigenous and traditional communities land rights. Today we are talking about CBD post 2020 and its 30 by 30 target the overarching objective of the convention is aimed at designating 30% of earth's land and ocean area as protected areas and if the state doesn't take a human rights-based approach to biodiversity conservation, we are bound to witness the eviction of this indigenous communities from their home land, their lands seized and a spike in biodiversity loss. This article focuses on addressing the threat posed by the 30 by 30 target to indigenous and community land rights

and possibility of worsening the biodiversity situation if it falls short of a human rights-based approach towards conservation. It will also be useful to anyone interested in getting acquainted with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its impact on indigenous rights and development in Cameroon. The article concludes with a discussion on reconciling these conflicts in order to achieve biodiversity conservation and development without indigenous land rights violation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been conducted on the threat posed by conservation on land rights of indigenous and traditional communities in Cameroon. Despite this many studies conducted there is still room for further research in this area since limited progress has been made in the protection of the biodiversity and indigenous rights especially in developing states like Cameroon. Therefore, indigenous rights and biodiversity remains threatened till date and the threat will be aggravated following the convention on biological diversity post 2020 and its 30 by 30 target.

In (Oliver and Emmanuel, 2018), they identified the fundamental role of biodiversity as part of the countries national heritage and even examined some of the of new legal and institutional tools that characterize the current framework for the protection of Cameroon's biodiversity and the role of protected areas in conservation. However, despite significant progress in developing biodiversity related global and national legal instruments, the role of indigenous communities in conservation and their rights to participate in the decisions making process that affects

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them neglected has the loss of valuable plant and animal species, loss of habitat, genetic erosion and ecosystem degradation

Also referring to the 1994 Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Regulation, in its articles 37 and 38, which introduced a new concept of the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity under the nomenclature of Community Forests. Under these provisions, the State shall sign an agreement with any desirous local community to enable it promote the management of forest resources with the assistance of the services in charge of forests. This type of management shall be carried out through management plans drawn up at the behest of the community and approved by the services in charge of forest. In this way, the local community concerned manages the forest in question and reap the attendant benefits. However, a major point of contention with the 1994 Forest Code is its failure to recognize rights to the lands, territories, and resources of indigenous peoples who are the real experts on their environment and others can only learn much from them in terms of management of biodiversity.

Based on the Convention on Biodiversity post 2020 framework, a convention which Cameroon has ratified and its vision 2030 also referred to as 30 by 30 target which calls on the protection and conservation of at least 30% of the planet with areas particularly important for biodiversity through effective systems of protected areas and other effective area-based biodiversity measures. However, the application of this convention is conflicting with the protection of the land rights of indigenous communities, which is likely to worsen the human rights condition of indigenous communities in forest areas and will result in them being evicted from their ancestral home and this will only happen if the state doesn't adopt a human rights-based approach towards conservation.

According to the National Biological Strategic Action (NBSAP, 2011), which had as one of its missions, to take all necessary measures to reduce the rate of national biodiversity loss and ensure long-term sustainability of biodiversity by 2020 and in its principle 3 which states that at all levels of biodiversity decision making processes, stakeholders including local communities and vulnerable groups are entitled to participate and for this purpose should have access to information on biodiversity. One strategy adopted to achieve this goal was the creation of protected areas for conservation such as national parks and the state has paid little or no attention to the fundamental role of indigenous communities towards effective conservation. However, this protected areas are slowly degenerating because of government allocation of this protected areas for logging through concession agreements, which has defeated the purpose of protected areas and displaced many forest indigenous communities whose traditional knowledge would have been instrumental in the protection of the environment.

However, despite the research conducted by the many authors above, their research didn't touch on the Convention on Biological Diversity post 2020 and didn't

address the threat posed by conservation strategies like protected areas on indigenous land rights. . My research looks at the threat posed the new Convention on biological diversity post 2020 and its 30x30 target on indigenous land rights, if the state were to implement following without recognizing the fundamental role of indigenous and traditional communities in conservation. This research will give a better picture of conservation in Cameroon and indigenous rights post 2020.

## METHODOLOGY

The research methods employed in this research involved qualitative data analysis. It's aimed at interpreting and analyzing environmental legislations and policies, both at the international and the national level as applied in Cameroon and how it affects indigenous land rights towards conservation. Patton (2002:41) referred to this process as inductive analysis and creative synthesis. The qualitative data analysis was conducted through extensive literature review and significant amount of background reading on environmental law and indigenous rights journal articles, books and websites in order to locate particular pieces of information while using an inductive approach. The method applied is purely doctrinal which relied on devices such as ethnography and case studies in the process of data collection.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Convention on Biological Diversity and the role of Cameroon towards conservation.

According to a 2018 ranking published (by the World-Wide Fund (WWF), Cameroon's flora and fauna biodiversity ranks 21st globally and 4th in Africa (WWF, 2018). The country is said to rank fifth for fauna diversity and fourth for flora in Africa and is often referred to as Africa in miniature because it comprises all the major climatic conditions, vegetation and wild life features of the African continent. Cameroon is a country endowed with forest cover that constitutes roughly 42 % (about 20 million hectares) of the country's total land area (Mohanty, 2021). The country's evergreen forest located in the southern part of the country and constitutes part of the Congo Basin Forest confinement and is home to millions of people and some indigenous communities as well as the last indigenous population of the African rainforest "the pygmies" (Donmez, 2022). According to the International Tropical Timber Organization, Cameroon's forest is also home to closely 10,000 species of plants, mammals, and birds, making it one of the highest species densities of any African country, 30% of which are unique to the region (Mbatu, 2016). In the wake of a global increase in the loss of biological diversity, many countries across the globe have rallied behind an international call to protect the environment including Cameroon which is encapsulated in a legal instrument referred to as the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Convention was formally initiated in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio

de Janeiro 1992, with over a hundred states adopting the official text which was then forwarded for ratification and implementation. The Convention has three main objectives: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its component and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources (Magnusson, 2022).

### Cameroon's role in the protection of biodiversity and the Convention on Biological Diversity pre-2020.

Cameroon became a party to the convention upon ratification in the year 1995 and some of its subsequent protocols like the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety which seeks to ensure an adequate level of protection in the safe movement and use of living modified organisms from biotechnology likely to adversely affect biodiversity and the 2010 Nagoya Protocol which recognizes the contribution of genetic resources and information from genetic material in promoting research and development in fast growing pharmaceutical, cosmetic, biotech and food industries and the inadequate contribution of its benefits to conservation. Cameroon has equally played an active role in international negotiations and one of such roles was the key role it played as part of the lead negotiators for the UN Africa Region in the negotiations and adoption of major biodiversity related conventions, protocols and generated a national process with the political momentum resulting in national ratification or adherence to the multiple multilateral environmental agreements to which Cameroon is a party (Ruppel *et al.*, 2018, p. 437).

Apart from that, the country is party to some other major biodiversity related multilateral agreements introduced by acts of ratification, which go a long way to confirm the country's role in the protection of the environment and some of this international legal instruments have made some significant contributions in shaping national responses and intervention actions in the protection of national critical ecosystems such as the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance and the Convention on the Law of the Sea 1973, endangered species which are regulated under the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals 1979 and Convention on the Protection of World Heritage, Culture and Nature 1972, crimes on protected species and trade in endangered species regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Plants and Animals 1973, specific uses of genetic resources international Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2001 and major threats to biodiversity regulated under the Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation 2001 and the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements and Disposal of Hazardous Wastes 1989 and the Convention on Climate Change 1992 and its Kyoto Protocol; Convention to Combat Desertification 1994.

In 2000, the Country completed its first National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan NBSAP but

wasn't implemented due to some constraints Republic of Cameroon National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan – Version II (NBSAP,2012). In the year 2010, the Country updated its NBSAP known as the Aichi target which was to run from 2012 to 2020. Target 11 of the NBSAP ensures coherence of the biodiversity policy with the protected target area of 30%, adopted the following as a national priority by the year 2020: By 2020, at least 30% of the national territory, taking into consideration ecosystem representativeness are under effectively and equitably managed protected areas (Ruppel *et al.*, p.444). The current trend in protected area in the implementation of this law depicts an increase of 76.5% in the creation of protected areas between 2000 with a baseline of 17 Protected Areas and 2012 having a total of 30 Protected Areas. By 2012 there was a wide protected area network of 19 National Parks, 7 Wildlife Reserves, 5 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 3 Botanical Gardens, 47 Synergetic Zones and 26 Community Managed Synergetic Zones with a total cover of 16,683,779 ha in protected areas and 9,159,135 ha specifically for wildlife (Cameroon's Forestry, wildlife and fisheries regulations, 1994).

This represents 19.25% of the national territory and has enabled national progress beyond the global target of the Aichi Targets set at 15% for terrestrial protected areas. Management plans have been developed and adopted to ensure the protection of most of the protected areas. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan version II (NBSAP II) which recognized the significance of these international instruments in the framework for international and regional cooperation in the protection and valorization of Cameroon's biodiversity as well as regional legal tools in the management of shared trans-boundary ecosystems (Ruppel *et al.*, 2018, p. 439). This recognition is highlighted with the identification of 21 biodiversity-related international agreements and 21 regional agreements ratified by Cameroon and demonstrates a long-standing national commitment to collectively defined norms, proposed a different policy orientation which was to reverse and halt the current trend in biodiversity loss as a way of establishing a strong nature base that is indispensable for the country's socioeconomic growth. NBSAP II was implemented through 2020 and contained 4 strategic goals, 20 national-level and 10 ecosystem-specific targets, priority actions, timeframes for action, performance indicators and actors/organizations responsible for implementation (Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, 2022). In implementing its National Biological Strategic Action Plan (NBSAP), the country made some progress.

Apart from the regulatory laws enacted and conventions signed by the government of Cameroon towards the conservation of Biodiversity, the state equally recognizes the fundamental role of indigenous and local communities living in forest riparian communities as stewards in natural resource management and towards the conservation of biodiversity, even though these rights are limited to traditional collections with no reference to rights over their



traditional knowledge. This restriction is further reflected in the 1994 Forest Code in its Section 7 which regulates ownership by stating that the State, local councils, village communities and private individuals may exercise on their forest and aquacultural establishments all the rights that result from ownership subject to restrictions laid down in the regulations governing land tenure and State lands and by this law (Ruppel *et al.*, p. 440). The Forest Code grants usage rights while stipulating those customary rights are those accorded to local populations to exploit all forest wildlife and fish products with the exception of protected species for their personal use.

They may be temporarily or permanently suspended when the need arises for reasons of public interest. However, the 1994 Forest Code pays lips service towards the recognition of indigenous people's rights to the lands, territories and resources they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used and acquired. This has been a major issue during Cameroon's recent Forest Code reforms and is about to become more of a bigger problem with the more recent Convention on Biological Diversity post 2020 and its 30 x 30 target. However, despite many measures adopted by the government aimed at conserving biodiversity, implementation, governance and the sidelining of indigenous communities constitute one of the major challenges today in ensuring compliant behaviors that favor biodiversity and at the same time ensuring indigenous rights are respected in the process of conservation.

Prior to CBD post 2020, the government had bypassed some of these laws and carried out developmental activities that endanger biodiversity and violate the rights of this indigenous communities. In 2020 the government signed a concession agreement allocating about 68,385 hectares of Ebo-forest, inhabited by 40 Indigenous communities and half the size of London for logging. With pressure from advocacy groups and the international community, the concession agreements were suspended and not terminated. This is just one of the many acts of government threatening biodiversity and indigenous rights (International Land Coalition, 2022). With post CBD 2020 and its 30 by 30 targets, at center of discussions in the international community with regards to biodiversity conservation, the convention maybe used by the state to transform some of these forested areas inhabited by indigenous communities to protected areas and send them parking only to later on transform these protected areas into forest management units in future and allocate them for logging to meet up with her vision 2035 of becoming a highly industrialized country.

### Convention on Biological Diversity Post 2020 and Indigenous rights

According to the Worldwide Fund (WWF), Cameroon is home to a large community of indigenous peoples such as the Baka who are found in the southern and eastern regions of Cameroon, the Bagyeli and Bakola in the southern region, the Bedzand in the center region and

the Mbororos scattered in the northwest, southwest and northern regions. They have revered and treasured the lands they live upon for centuries. The livelihood of indigenous groups, like the Baka and the Bagyeli, depend largely on the forests. They pick fruits, hunt and build their homes from materials from the forest while worshipping nature, which embodies the spirit of living in harmony with nature.

The Mbororos, on the other hand, are grazers constantly migrating to different regions of the country because of conflicts between their grazing style and conservation efforts. These indigenous communities like the Baka who have lived for centuries in this forest have accumulated and passed on extensive ecological knowledge and sophisticated cultural mechanisms of egalitarianism, sharing and human-nature conviviality and because of this rich cultural heritage, the Baka, and hunter-gatherers around the world, have consistently been forced into categories of 'primitive' and 'uncultured' by neighboring agriculturalist communities, national governments and some international actors (Hoyte & Clarke, 2020). Across the globe, indigenous people and traditional communities are accorded protection under international law. They are entitled to own, occupy, manage and use the lands, territories and natural resources that they have customarily used.

These rights are protected under various international instruments to which Cameroon is a party of and includes the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (art 14), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (arts 1, 2, 11, 12), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (arts 1, 27). Under international law, indigenous peoples' customary rights are equivalent to all forms of other property rights in the country and exist regardless of whether the State has recognized them.

In Cameroon, Indigenous Peoples' land rights are not recognized under national law, despite the fact that the majority of the national territory has been occupied and managed by local and Indigenous communities for centuries. Access to justice and political representation is effectively zero (Perram & Clarke 2018). Indigenous communities in Cameroon have overtime been considered as the long-time protectors of biodiversity which have been influenced by traditional believes, as a result they have often adopted sustainable practices in the usage of the biodiversity resources which has contributed towards the protection of biodiversity.

However, Despite the efforts made towards the conservation of Biodiversity, it is still increasingly threatened across the globe and any measure that doesn't recognize the role and rights of indigenous communities towards biodiversity conservation constitutes part of the threat rather than contribute towards the resolving the threat. With just 17% of land and 8 % of sea considered as being protected across the globe, coupled with an increase in unsustainable developmental practices, activities of huge extractive industries and the sidelining

of indigenous communities by some states with regards to the management of natural resource and conservation of biodiversity have led to this current state of biodiversity crisis (Govan, 2020). Some scientists and conservation advocates are rallying behind an international call to protect biodiversity code name “30 by 30 targets” which according to them could go a long way towards averting the biodiversity crisis while also helping to address other environmental and health challenges such as climate change and the risk of future pandemics.

The CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (WG2020-3), particularly its target 3 which is commonly referred to as the “30 by 30 initiatives” has as its overarching goal to increase conservation of land and sea areas up to 30 percent by 2030. This 30% is a minimum target for land, sea and freshwater to protect and conserve key biodiversity values, including species at risk, high biodiversity areas, key migration sites, spawning areas, and ecologically intact areas which protect large-scale ecological processes (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2021).

Adding in climate Refugio and areas of high carbon density increases the area required to over 50%. Achieving effective protection and conservation on at least 30% of the planet by 2030 is a critical step toward achieving the CBD’s 2050 Vision of Living in Harmony with Nature, as well as post-2020 ambitions for biodiversity (Woodley *et al.*, 2019). All these is to be carried out through conservation practices such as marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures also referred to as “conserved areas” and to do so using area-based conservation measures such as parks. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) a protected area refers to a clearly defined geographical space recognized, dedicated and managed through legal or other effective means to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework aims to guide actions worldwide through 2030, to preserve and protect nature and its essential services to people and builds on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. We may look at the CBD post 2020, 30 by 30 target as a stepping stone towards the conservation of biodiversity, which will mean saving the earth in the long run.

### **Dangers of Protected areas without the due consideration of Indigenous rights**

However, the realization of this grand vision of the CBD 30 by 30 target to conserve biodiversity without taking into consideration a human rights-based approach in its strategy will mean the violation of human rights and the biggest land grab in history (Shanahan, 2021). The convention remains controversial because protected areas have a history on indigenous rights abuse and could significantly disrupt Indigenous peoples and local communities’ governance, management and conservation systems across all aquatic territories of life, in both in-

shore and offshore areas, forested areas. What we call protected areas today is as a result of a movement that started since in 1961, with the First World Parks Congress in Seattle, USA, since when the International Union has spearheaded it for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and today we have about 7.9 million square meters of protected land, with an anticipated increase in the nearest future (McNeely & Harrison, 2008). While some have saved species from extinction, others so called paper parks which are legally established protected areas where experts believe current protection activities are insufficient to halt degradation are ineffectively managed (Dudley and Stolton, 1999).

A disturbing number of protected areas have also harmed local people through forced displacement and human rights abuses inflicted by militarized park guards (Shenan, 2021). Most advocates of indigenous rights and strong critics of the 30 by 30 target have decried it as a scheme that legitimizes gov’t seizure of lands in the guise of protected areas taking into consideration the fact that the process of seeking free, prior and informed consent from Indigenous peoples who inhabit these areas that are targeted as potential conservation areas is not followed to the latter and presents on of the greatest challenges towards the protection of indigenous rights. In fact during a high-level event on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2021 according to Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Coordinator of the Association of Peul Women and Autochthonous Peoples of Chad, and member of the Campaign for Nature’s Global steering committee he stated that “There must be recognition of the 80% of biodiversity that Indigenous peoples are conserving already and the 30x30 initiative is a good complementary idea as long as it is done with the free prior and informed consent and in partnership with indigenous peoples, respecting them and their rights and traditional knowledge that we know are essential to effectively protect nature and provide for people. In many developing countries like Cameroon, there are no adequate provisions for public participation in environmental governance, which leaves these indigenous communities from having a fair say in establishing “protected” areas that are likely to be the most affected by these decisions.

Despite provisions in the current CBD framework and draft post-2020 GBF to include ‘Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures’ in global conservation targets, experience has shown that state-owned, strict protected areas have often remained the default choice in much of the Global South (Minority rights group international *et al.*, 2020). The absence of effective measures to protect the rights, lands and livelihood of Indigenous peoples and other communities in, conservation-based programs by the draft CBD leaves much to be desired as it has the potential of violating international laws. This is much reflected in creation of more protected in areas in Cameroon which will mean the employment of many forest guards who are often armed

to protect these protected areas from poachers and other threats. However, most of these eco-guards who are often ill-equipped and pressured to get results, target the Baka with extreme abuse in the name of conservation. As anthropologist Jerome Lewis puts it: “Unable to act against the powerful perpetrators of the illegal wildlife trade, eco-guards began to attack softer targets: the hunter-gatherers and villagers” (Lewis, 2020). According to Hoyte and Clark, the Baka who are hunter-gatherers Baka families do not hunt, fish and forage (just) for fun. It is their means of survival. The confiscation of meat hunted under droit d’usage (user rights) is nothing but criminal. Some eco-guards push this brutality further, confiscating the Baka’s most treasured gift of the forest wild honey for seemingly no reason other than to assert their power (Duda, 2017).

Despite agreements being reached between the state and these indigenous communities the enable those to once again carry out traditional activities within the parks through a management plan. Their rights to access and use are being treated as a privilege being granted by the government which requires Baka communities to give something in return rather than as a right which the government’s creation of these protected areas has systematically violated, and which must be remedied. This ultimately reflects the broader problem that these MOUs do not remedy the fundamental ongoing violation of human rights, which is the non-recognition and non-respect for indigenous peoples’ customary lands, territories and natural resources (Catherine, 2020, p.5).

Apart from the right of these indigenous communities to access their homeland being threatened, their traditional way of lively hood is also at risk.

Young men have sought work in local gold mines, however they reported frequent harassment, threats and abuse from eco-guards, who sometimes confiscate their earnings on the pretext that they don’t have ID cards to present when asked and also forest land around the Parks is not free for local access either as they are leased out to international trophy hunting safari operators (Catherine, 2020, p.5). According to Catherine Clarke (2020), These zones are guarded and access is restricted during hunting seasons. however, this restriction increasingly extends even outside hunting seasons and is enforced by anti-poaching patrols. According to FPP’s findings, the Baka reported that there is a high risk of being hit by stray bullets or being confused with game if they venture into the forest (which is just five kilometers from the road) during hunting periods and that fishing and foraging are increasingly compromised in off-seasons, as guards’ reason that the same resources the Baka live on are needed by the animals which are trophy hunted. Women reported that their traditional initiation ceremony has disappeared since the creation of the Parks.

Traditional medicine is still practiced; however, certain trees which are important for remedies are found deep within protected areas and have not been accessible for many years. As hunter gatherers traditionally teach their

children in the forest, using a learning-by-doing approach, there is limited space to enact and impart their knowledge, with the impacts on the next generation already visible, e.g., reduced knowledge of medicinal plants and hunting techniques.

Although the convention of biological diversity post 2020 and its 30 by 30 target will bring about the protection of biodiversity, it was found that consequences it will have on the land rights of indigenous and traditional communities in Cameroon will be immense if it falls short of a human rights based approach towards conservation and this is what entails in the Cameroon especially with the lack of political will by government to effectively place these indigenous communities at the center of natural resource management. However, this precarious situation could be mitigated.

Firstly, prior to any proposed land conservation action, the government should consult local communities who depend on such lands for their livelihood. Both the government and stakeholders should be accountable and hence should involve local communities in all stages of the land conservation process. This is done to ensure that local people either benefit from investment projects or the negative consequences are minimized. Lack of adequate consultation: participation, accountability, equality, non-discrimination, empowerment and legality lead to lack of public confidence on such moves. Prior consultation with the local communities will give them the opportunity to assess how they will benefit or be affected by the project and to be prepared for such outcomes.

Secondly, Conservation has a positive impact on the environment but negative impacts on local communities’ livelihood as a result, they should be compensated accordingly. For instance, those who had been grazing animals, growing crops, fetching water, collecting grasses or firewood on the land should be given alternative land. Conservation does not only dispossess local communities the important assets for their livelihoods, we have also seen that they can result in eviction of local people. The government should ensure that any proposed action will not result in eviction, and if eviction is inevitable, then government must make sure that victims get financial and other compensation packages based on independent assessment and benefits prior to the eviction.

It was observed that the Constitution does not contain a clear-cut provision on the right to access to information as in other jurisdictions like in South African and Ugandan Constitutions. It is therefore recommended that the Constitution be revised to include this provision in order to enable people gain access to public and privately held information and to encourage and promote transparency and accountability in the governance of public affairs generally

Also, Civil society organizations can help local voices to be heard so that the desired attention is given to the local communities. Civil society may also raise the awareness levels of both the authorities and the rest of citizens through campaigns and education. They can also help put

pressures on the stakeholders and its country of origin to oblige it adopts standard practices in its conduct.

## CONCLUSION

There has always been a conflict between conservation and indigenous land rights in Cameroon. The CBD post 2020 and its 30x 30 target only makes it worst if the state adopts a conservation strategy devoid of a human rights based approach. The international community, local NGOs, indigenous communities and the state have a vital role to play towards ensuring that conservation is successfully implemented without violating the land rights of indigenous communities by addressing some issues like recognizing the role of indigenous communities in biodiversity conservation is not enough as when it comes to implementation of these rights the government of Cameroon pays lips service to them. What is needed is to first amend the 1994 forestry code to recognize the rights and role of indigenous communities as not subservient to national law and as the age long stewards of biodiversity. There is the need to empower this indigenous communities both educationally and politically, who have a spiritual and cultural connection to the natural environment and are more likely to repel legislations and developmental activities that threaten the forest.

Also While designating certain areas as protected areas viz a viz 30 x 30 target, the process of free, prior and informed concern is often neglected by the state and the end result is a vicious decision that leads to the eviction of this indigenous communities and the militarization of protected areas with armed forest guards who understand little or nothing about the indigenous communities and their culture. It is important that the state conforms to this requirement and ensure thorough education of the forest guards about the cultures and traditions of the people they are protecting the forest from and if possible, train forest guards from within the indigenous communities in order to avoid the violation of indigenous rights.

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