

Joint meeting of
the CBD LG on
Bushmeat and
CITES Central
Africa Bushmeat
WG, Nairobi,
7-10 June 2011

FAO's work on sustainable use of bushmeat

engaging in international policy
processes and finding practical
solutions at the local level



Context

- There are severe levels of overhunting of protected and non-protected wildlife species in tropical forests for commercial trade.
- This trade is often unsustainable and illegal.
- It is driven by rapidly growing commercial urban markets for meat and other wildlife products, both domestic and international.
- Consumption is both by rural communities and by urban consumers, who are often at the end of supply chains hundreds of kilometres away.



Context *ct.*

- As a result, remaining primary tropical and sub-tropical forests are widely becoming empty of large vertebrates (“empty forest syndrome”).
- The consequence is not only the loss of species and genetic diversity, but also weakened ecosystem functionality and resilience and an increased potential for novel diseases to emerge.
- Healthy forests rely for regeneration on large and small mammals, birds and insects as essential pollination and seed dispersal agents.
- Overhunting is thus also reducing the forests’ potential for carbon storage.



Context *ct.*

- Hunting rates in tropical Africa are more than six times greater than sustainable levels.
- In Asia large animals are already gone from most tropical forests.
- Productivity of tropical forests for wild meat is at least an order of magnitude less than of more open habitats, such as savannahs.
- If people solely depend on wild meat for their protein, human population densities of more than one person per square kilometre cannot be sustained in tropical forests.



Context *ct.*

- Bushmeat hunting has been an important source of protein for indigenous and local communities in tropical forests all over the world for millennia.
- It provides 30 to 80 per cent of the protein in rural diets in Central Africa.
- Commercial bushmeat trade threatens the survival of indigenous communities which depend on sustainable hunting for livelihoods.
- In the Congo Basin, 34 million people depend on bushmeat for protein consuming estimated 579 million forest mammals annually adding up to about 5 million tonnes of dressed wild meat.



Context *ct.*

- Eating bushmeat is not new, but what has changed is the scale of the practice and its commercial nature.
- A severe loss of bushmeat protein has been predicted for the future, if current extraction levels continue.
- Non-bushmeat protein will be insufficient to fully replace the wild meats.
- Bushmeat could at least partly be replaced by other vegetal sources, dairy products, and/or meat from domesticated animals, however, substitution cannot happen over night.



FAO bushmeat work in a nutshell

- FAO is committed to conserve biodiversity and improve the livelihoods of rural people in developing countries, through ...
- ensuring that the use of wildlife resources is legal and sustainable and does not pose a health risk to people and animals, while ...
- working with national & international partners.
 - concepts, studies, policy recommendations, guidelines, best practices, educational resources;
 - creation of and support to regional networks;
 - design and implementation of field projects;
 - organization of technical workshops, expert meetings and information events;
 - capacity development and training



International policy processes

- In 2008, the CBD COP 9 identified the unsustainable hunting of bushmeat as a priority to be addressed by Parties (decision IX/5).
- In 2009, the first CBD Liaison Group meeting on bushmeat was convened in conjunction with FAO WFC 13 resulting in recommendations to improve sustainability of bushmeat harvesting.
- In 2010, the CBD COP 10 requested the Liaison Group to develop, in cooperation with FAO and other organizations, a revised version of the recommendations, including small-scale food and income alternatives based on the sustainable use of biodiversity (decision X/32).



FAO GEF bushmeat project

- FAO prepared a regional GEF project for Gabon, the Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic to implement / test a new approach to bushmeat: the legal, sustainable use of selected non-threatened species through participatory wildlife management.
- Title: Sustainable management of the wildlife and bushmeat sector in Central Africa
- endorsed by the GEF CEO in early May 2011
- project duration: 5 years (for replication)
- GEF full size project



FAO GEF bushmeat project *ct.*

- The project aims to demonstrate in pilot sites how the main barriers to the development of participatory wildlife management (PWM)
 - (1) constraints in existing policy/legal frameworks
 - (2) insufficient tools
 - (3) insufficient institutional capacities

can be overcome and that community-based conservation and management of wildlife can be an effective strategy for conserving the integrity of wildlife, forest ecosystems and biodiversity in the Congo Basin.



FAO GEF bushmeat project *ct.*

- Project activities match the three categories by
 - (1) giving communities exclusive well-defined rights to wildlife and developing a regional wildlife management policy;
 - (2) developing PWM tools;
 - (3) building institutional capacity for PWM of major stakeholders, including for replication.
- Ambitious: so far no effective solutions have been found to reverse the overharvesting of wildlife and make consumption sustainable.
- Complex: requires multi-dimensional approach and the empowerment of local communities and involvement of different stakeholders.



FAO GEF bushmeat project *ct.*

- CBNRM is not a new concept.
- It has produced some results, but only some.
- Its potential has not been used fully. Why?
 - It is not easy to implement it in practice.
 - There are many forces opposed to it, in particular a lack of political will to empower local people to the degree required to make it work in the long-term.
- CBNRM will be a key challenge for the FAO GEF bushmeat project as local community members shall be empowered to manage community hunting lands and will participate in developing wildlife management systems and community regulations for access to and use of wildlife.



FAO GEF bushmeat project *ct.*

- Legalizing bushmeat use is a contentious issue.
 - Some NGOs in Central Africa believe that opening the door to limited and controlled hunting may lead to even higher levels of uncontrolled hunting and eventually extinction of major forest species.
- This risk needs to be addressed and closely monitored in the project's pilot sites.



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Thank you !

