Joint workshop regarding Brainforest's contribution to the implementation of a collaborative management framework for natural resources in the Minkebe-west forest massif (Minvoul)

Atelier conjoint relatif à la contribution de Brainforest dans la mise en oeuvre d'un cadre de gestion concertée des ressources naturelles dans le massif forestier de Minkebe-ouest (Minvoul)

joint report regarding the contribution of Brainforest in the implementation of a co-managed framework for natural resource management in the Minkebe-west forest massif (Minvoul) "Participatory Mapping Project in the Congo Basin" "Facilitating community involvement in national park management in Gabon" PROJECTS

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Report Writing DJINANG MARTIAL (Project Manager, Brainforest) Sam ZIENGUI KASSA (Assistant, Brainforest) BRainFoRESt Ancienne SOBRAGA District, Opposite the Ministry of Mines, P.O. Box: 23 749 Libreville – Tel: 44 53 52 E-mail: info@brain-forest.org – url: www.brain-forest.org Registration No: 00265/MISPD/SG/CT - NIF: 89616C The content of this publication was developed with the financial support of the Rainforest Foundation Fund and DFID (UK) ® The opinions expressed, the information presented in this report do not in any way constitute the expression of the opinion of the donors and are the responsibility of Brainforest © September 2010

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Report of the joint workshop regarding the contribution of Brainforest in the implementation of a co-managed framework for natural resource management in the Minkebe-west forest massif (Minvoul) Minvoul, September 4, 2010 "PARTICIPATORY MAPPING PROJECT IN THE CONGO BASIN" "FACILITATING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS IN GABON"

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1 FIRST PART Generalities

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2 Report of the joint workshop regarding the contribution of Brainforest in the implementation of a co-managed framework for natural resource management in the Minkebe-west forest massif (Minvoul) I- INTRODUCTION The issue of natural resource governance has increased over the years in our century, particularly due to the coexistence on common lands of several actors with objectives and interests that are not always convergent. Indeed, while some appropriate the forest space for economic and conservation needs, others see it primarily as their main habitat, the place where they extract the elements necessary for their survival. In Gabon, in particular, the creation of a Network of 13 National Parks in 2002, covering more than 11% of the national territory, was meant to further stimulate this debate by clearly raising the question of reconciling the rights of communities with the needs for conservation of natural resources. In light of the above, the Gabonese legislator adopted Law No. 003/2007 relating to national parks. This law provides, through several elements, mechanisms for community participation in the management of these spaces. These include: – The development of management plans for national parks that take into account the usage rights of local communities; – The creation of peripheral zones, local management advisory committees, and land management contracts for communities living near the parks; Similarly, in the past, concerning the forestry exploitation sector, the Gabonese legislator also provided through the Forestry Code (Law No. 16/01 of December 31, 2001) other mechanisms for community participation which essentially summarize as follows: – The creation of a rural forest domain (Article 5 Forestry Code); – Customary usage rights (Article 14 Forestry Code); – Community forests (Article 156 Forestry Code); – Administrative hunting (Article 196 Forestry Code), initiated by the administration to cull animals in case of crop destruction or threat to human lives by them; – The contribution of forestry operators to the realization of social works in villages (Article 251 Forestry Code);

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3 Generalities Still in this perspective, the Sectoral Forest Environment Program (PSFE) was subsequently initiated, one of its many merits being not only to foresee the participation of communities in the management of natural resources but also to equip Gabon with a Development Plan for Indigenous Peoples. It is with the aim of effectively contributing to the implementation of this policy of participation of local and indigenous communities in the management of Gabon's natural resources that the organization Brainforest, in collaboration

with various target groups (local communities, civil society, administrative authorities, natural resource managers), and with the support of its partner the Rainforest Foundation UK, has been implementing since 2009 two projects titled "Participatory Mapping in the Congo Basin" and "Facilitating Community Involvement in National Park Management in Gabon." Through these, the following objectives are to be achieved: – Regarding the project to facilitate community involvement in national park management, it aims to contribute to the establishment at the local level of management frameworks for national parks that take into account the rights and interests of communities. – The participatory mapping project, for its part, aims to be much broader and has the overall objective of promoting the consideration of the rights of forest communities in legislative, political, and strategic processes regarding access, control, and use of forests. This overall objective is broken down into three specific objectives that concern: Strengthening the capacities of local communities including indigenous peoples, civil society members, and state agents in participatory mapping; Supporting communities in producing participatory maps of their village territories and the use of forest resources; Using the participatory maps thus produced, to take into account the rights of communities in various local and regulatory processes concerning the management of natural resources. It is within the framework of these different projects that on September 4, 2010, a workshop was organized in Minvoul among the target groups of the project on the contribution of Brainforest in the implementation of a co-managed framework for natural resource management in Minkébé West.

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4 Report of the joint workshop regarding Brainforest's contribution to the implementation of a concerted management framework for natural resources in the Minkebe-West forest massif (Minvoul) In addition to the restitution of pilot mapping and participatory research work conducted on the management of lands and resources by four (04) communities in this area, the Minvoul workshop served as a platform for exchange among participants who thus initiated an open dialogue and unanimously decided on the necessity of adopting a new mode of resource management that takes into account the interests of the parties involved. Not without recalling the current shortcomings, this multi-stakeholder workshop led to a crucial recommendation from the communities: "We do not refuse the national park, nor the forests; we simply want to be informed about what is happening and also benefit from the advantages because if everything is taken away from us, how will we live?" While summarizing the work and the recommendations that emerged, this report will revisit the approach used and the objectives pursued during these exchanges. II- GLOBAL OBJECTIVES Through the organization and facilitation of this multi-stakeholder meeting, Brainforest aims to contribute to and facilitate the establishment of a concerted management framework for natural resources that takes into account the rights of local and indigenous communities living in the Minkebe West forest massif. III- SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES Specifically, this workshop aimed at the following objectives: – To provide a restitution of the mapping and participatory research work conducted on the management of natural resources by local and indigenous communities of Minkebe West; – To facilitate dialogue among the various actors involved in the management of the Minvoul forests regarding the current system of natural resource management and the desired changes; – To facilitate the consideration of community rights in local forest management processes through the capitalization of mapping work and participatory research conducted;

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5 Generalities – To allow stakeholders to discuss the idea of establishing a committee responsible for monitoring the management of natural resources in the Minvoul area. IV- METHODOLOGY In the context of this workshop, we employed a dual working approach. The

first consisted of bringing together all stakeholders concerned with forest management around a table, in order to stimulate discussions, where community representatives provided restitution of the results obtained (participatory report and maps of village lands and resource use). This restitution was complemented by presentations from the project team also covering these various results. The second approach involved organizing workshop sessions based on specific themes. It is also important to note that in order to make the discussions interactive, the various restitutions were followed by question-and-answer sessions, comments, and different contributions from stakeholders. To ensure that all debates were captured by all participants, translation from French to Fang and vice versa was provided by one of the facilitators of the workshop.

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7 SECOND PART Proceedings of the workshop

8 Report of the joint workshop regarding Brainforest's contribution to the implementation of a concerted management framework for natural resources in the Minkebe-West forest massif (Minvoul) I- KICK-OFF OF THE WORKSHOP As is customary in such circumstances, the kick-off of this workshop on Saturday, October 4, 2010, was to be done through various speeches planned for this purpose, the introduction of participants, and the outline of the day's program. I-a) Welcome and opening remarks Regarding the introductory speeches, the various participants were greeted by speeches from Mr. ESSONO ONDO, Program Coordinator of Brainforest, and Mr. NGUEMA Alexis, Secretary General of the Prefecture of Minvoul, representing the absent Prefect. The summary of these speeches (see Annexes) is provided below: Welcome speech from the Program Coordinator of Brainforest While thanking the various participants for their presence at this multi-stakeholder workshop, Mr. ESSONO ONDO did not fail to revisit the beginning of Brainforest's activities in the city of Minvoul in 2008 through the project on the Accelerated Method of Participatory Research (MARP) in the Haut-Ntem Department. Continuing his speech on the missions of the structure he oversees and beyond the presentation of the objectives of the two concerned projects whose ultimate goal is the better management of our natural resources through the recognition of the rights of local communities in the management and control of natural resources, the Program Coordinator of Brainforest emphasized the goal aimed by Brainforest which, through this workshop, aspires to contribute in its own way to the implementation of a concerted management framework for natural resources. For him, this contribution largely relies on the approaches of Mapping and Participatory Research developed by his structure in collaboration with other actors involved in the management of natural resources in Gabon. From this speech, it will also be noted an invitation to the government to equip itself with reliable information for good ecological governance in our country. This is indeed the reason why he will insist on the importance of valuing the work done on the ground by Brainforest. He will also emphasize the need for consultation and frank collaboration among the various actors involved in the management of Gabon's forests. In conclusion, Mr. ESSONO ONDO encouraged everyone to engage in an open debate, to share their different experiences, and to adopt conciliatory positions in order to arrive at proposals that will effectively improve the current system of natural resource management in the Minkebe West periphery. Opening speech from the Secretary General of the Haut-Ntem Department From this speech, the following key messages can be retained: – The government's adherence to the projects of:

"Participatory Mapping" and "Facilitation of Population Involvement" implemented by Brainforest in the region; – The government's willingness to sustainably manage the forests that constitute the habitat and the nourishing lifeline of local and indigenous populations; – Encouragement of collaboration between the private sector and the public sector through a type of partnership that activates non-governmental organizations, public administration, the national parks agency, and local populations; – The important role that local populations and NGOs must play in decision-making regarding natural resource management; – Encouragement of all stakeholders to get involved in the reflection concerning the necessity of implementing a concerted management framework for natural resources in the city of Minvoul. I-b) Presentation of the different participants and outline of the agenda The continuation of the activities was to proceed with the presentation of the participants and the outline of the workshop program. Regarding the presentation of participants, it should be noted that its purpose was not only to allow the people present to get to know each other, but it also helped to break down barriers, particularly between administrative authorities and participants who are not used to interacting with them daily and speaking in public. This presentation was also intended to show that almost all target groups were present. Indeed, the presence of local administrative authorities (Secretary General of the Prefecture, President of the Departmental Council, Mayor, Brigade Commander), traditional authorities (village chiefs and canton chiefs), heads of relevant technical services (Conservator of the Minkebe National Park, Head of Water and Forests), representatives of national and international NGOs (Brainforest, Ariga, Edzengui, WWF), and representatives of local and indigenous communities was noted. However, it is worth noting the significant absence of the only forestry exploitation company in the region, which is TTIB.

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11 Proceedings of the workshop The presentation of the program aimed to ensure that those who did not have it in their possession could become aware of it. This presentation was also intended to allow the proposed program to be adjusted to meet expectations and to be adopted by the entire assembly. With the various welcome and opening speeches read, participants having gotten to know each other, and the work program definitively established, the Minvoul workshop was to continue with the restitution of the mapping and participatory research work conducted on the management of lands and natural resources by four (04) communities living in the periphery of the Minkebe West National Park.

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12 II- RESTITUTION OF THE MAPPING AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH WORK CONDUCTED ON THE MANAGEMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES BY COMMUNITIES LIVING IN THE PERIPHERY OF THE MINKEBE-WEST NATIONAL PARK II-a) Restitution of the mapping and participatory research work conducted This restitution was made both by representatives of the communities and by the Brainforest project team. A) Presentation of the communities The communities used French, Fang, and Baka in their presentation, not only to highlight their different specificities but also to ensure that all present understood the message delivered. Although organized around only 4 points, this presentation had the merit of highlighting all the necessary information for a good understanding of the communities as well as the difficulties they face regarding access to the use and control of natural resources. As a result, the communities addressed the following points in turn: Their history and migratory journey Restitution of the work by the communities

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13 In this section, the communities mentioned their forced departure from Minkébé during the colonization period. They also alluded to the ancestral rights they possess over the lands in question. To prove their statement, the communities cited the existence of their ancient villages, the graves of their ancestors, and fruit trees planted by their descendants in the old sites. The communities also took the necessary time to present their migratory journey from the old sites to the current sites. Ultimately, the communities insisted that everyone be informed that their occupation of the Minkébé area predates colonization and, consequently, predates the creation of the reserve and subsequently the national park. Their livelihood largely based on the use of forest resources Subsequently, the communities emphasized the strong relationship that exists between the forest and themselves. The communities brought to the public's attention the reality that it is in the forest that they practice their activities of agriculture, fishing, hunting, gathering, and collecting, first for food needs but also for the satisfaction of their primary needs and often for the education of their offspring. The communities did not fail to highlight the use of certain parts of the forest for their sacred worship and rites, hence the existence of sacred forests. It is important to specify that in this part, the communities used maps to illustrate their presentation. Their difficulties regarding access to the use and control of natural resources Regarding difficulties, the communities mentioned the following points: – the absence of dialogue between the communities and the authorities in charge of forest management; – the absence of demarcation of the national park boundaries on the ground; – the absence of agreement between the communities and forest managers on their customary use areas and the type of activities to be carried out there; – the exploitation of the TTIB forest concession without any benefit for the local communities; – poaching carried out by nationals from neighboring countries. Proposed solutions At the end of their presentation, the communities asked the administrative authorities about the alternative measures proposed to them if they had to put an end to their hunting activity in particular and to the limitation of other activities. Still related to the solutions to be adopted, the communities promised to produce a final statement before the end of the proceedings that would summarize all their wishes regarding the management of natural resources in the Minkébé West forest massif. B) Presentation of Brainforest In this section, the project team presented in turn the progress of the various projects related to this workshop and a summary of the report of participatory research conducted on the use of resources by the communities of the villages of Bitouga, Doumassi, Elarmintang, and Eto'o. Since the presentation of the maps was made by the communities, the team focused more on the methodological aspects of the work done. The various presentations will be reported in full in the annexes of this document. II-b) Reactions and contributions from the assembly One of the first reactions concerned the TTIB company. Indeed, many community members, while noting the absence of TTIB, wanted to know why it was not contributing to the realization of development projects in their villages. In response to this concern, the President of the Departmental Council will share with the assembly the various steps taken with this company. Thus, he will say that the company is fully aware of its obligations, but it is limited by the fact that the current exploitation zone of the company is much more outside the jurisdiction of Haut-Ntem, even though the largest part of the forest permit is located in Haut-Ntem. Continuing his remarks, he will reveal that not only does the company promise to contribute in terms of micro-projects, but also in terms of hiring local labor. Regarding the issue of taxes paid to Oyem while most of the permit is based on the forest area of Haut-Ntem, the President of the Departmental Council specified that the fault does not lie with TTIB, which strictly adheres to the directives of the Ministry of Water and Forests. That is why, based on the map presenting this reality, he promised to continue the necessary steps with the relevant authorities so that the wealth of Haut-Ntem can effectively benefit the populations of this locality. Regarding the prohibition of hunting activities, the Chief of the Water and Forests of Minvoul will inform the assembly about the existence in the law of an opening and closing period for big game hunting

for the protection of species and to allow them to multiply. He will also mention that small game remains regularly open but is subject to particular rules when not practiced within the framework of customary use rights. Continuing his remarks, he will share all the difficulties in terms of transportation means that he faces in the exercise of his functions. To this end, he will also criticize the attitude of certain communities who, although living close to the urban center, still expect information to be delivered to their homes. As for the national park, the communities wonder why the staff in charge of managing the park do not reside in Minvoul. The communities will also refer to the prohibition of conducting activities in the park. They also returned to the benefits they are entitled to expect from the park. The Conservator of the Minkébé National Park being present, he was able to provide the following clarifications: – the staff in charge of managing the park do not reside in the city due to the lack of a constructed living base. Similarly, to better fulfill their responsibilities regarding the two parts of the park, one located in Makokou and the other in Minvoul, the staff is obliged to reside in Oyem; – regarding the prohibition of conducting activities in the park, the Conservator reassured by specifying that the practice of activities such as fishing is exceptionally granted in the park he manages. He also spoke of the possibility for communities to carry out gathering and collecting activities within the park. For him, the real problem lies much more in the practice of poaching, he stated. – regarding the benefits derived from the parks, the Conservator will talk about eco-tourism activities that can be developed by communities living on the periphery of national parks. One of the last concerns raised was about capitalizing on the work of mapping and participatory research conducted for better management of resources at the local level. Here, everyone agreed to repeat the experience of Makokou by developing protocols that will formalize the collaborative relationship between the park administration and local communities. Thus, these protocols, while highlighting the recognized use areas for communities, will record the type of activities authorized by site as well as the means to be used for their practice. Following these exchanges, which were as diverse as they were varied, the workshop continued with the organization of work in committees. III- GROUP WORK, REPORTING AND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE ASSEMBLY

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17 Workshop Proceedings Group Work Another significant step in this multi-stakeholder meeting consisted of organizing workshop work. To this end, the facilitator proceeded to divide the participants into two working groups. The first group, made up of the communities, was to work on finalizing their final statement, while the second group, consisting of representatives from the administration, relevant technical administrations, some elites from Minvoul present, and NGOs, was to produce the terms of reference for the monitoring committee of the workshop's resolutions. It should be noted that the idea of a final statement from the communities was proposed by them, who deemed it wise to document all their grievances.

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18 Report of the joint workshop regarding Brainforest's contribution to the implementation of a concerted management framework for natural resources in the Minkebe-West forest massif (Minvoul) III-a) Final statement from the communities Reading of the final statement from the communities Despite the desire of some to see their concerns included in the document, the entire group was able to agree on the important elements and thus delivered, at the end of the proceedings, the following message: "We wish that any implementation of a project concerning the management and exploitation of Minkébé resources takes into account the different interests of the neighboring communities; interests that must be manifested through the following elements: – Recognition of our documented village and ancestral territories within the framework of participatory mapping; – Prior consultation of local and indigenous communities; a

permanent collaboration between our communities and the Water and Forests, forest exploiters such as TTIB, and any other exploiters. Also, for the purpose of job creation and facilitating our exchanges, we request that a representation of TTIB as well as one of their sawmills be established in Minvoul; – Equitable sharing of financial returns from the Minkébé forests through the establishment of a number of infrastructures such as administrative buildings, roads, schools, hospitals, housing, etc., in order to take into account the interests; – Establishment of a permanent consultation framework for the sustainable management of resources in our area; – Authorization to practice fishing and gathering activities within the Minkébé West national park."

19 Workshop Proceedings III-b) Terms of Reference for the Monitoring Committee of the Resolutions of Recommendations Made The second group worked to propose elements that would cover the entire functioning of the monitoring committee. Its recommendations focused essentially on 4 points. Regarding its composition, participants deemed it necessary to proceed with a distribution of positions taking into account the different categories of actors involved in natural resource management. However, for efficiency purposes, the group considered it wise to streamline the functioning of this committee by limiting the number of its members to 6, distributed as follows: 1 representative from the administration, 1 representative from programs and projects related to natural resource management, 2 representatives from communities, 1 representative from national and international civil society, and 1 representative from economic operators. The group continued its reflections by considering the role of this committee. To this end, two responsibilities were assigned to it. As a primary responsibility, it was decided that the committee would work to monitor the implementation of the resolutions arising from the workshop. It was also decided that this committee should facilitate the management of conflicts that arise in the region concerning natural resources. Regarding the execution of its missions and the frequency of its meetings, the group estimated that holding quarterly meetings would facilitate better monitoring of the resolutions that will emerge from this workshop. The question of the operating budget was addressed last. Here, the group proposed that the operating costs of this body be covered by the Brainforest Organization. III-c) Contributions from the Assembly After the restitution of the work in commission, the opportunity to express opinions on the presented contents was given to all participants. Regarding the final communiqué from the communities, the group felt that there was not much to modify. However, it was recommended to the facilitator to include the entirety of this communiqué in the present report, in order to avoid any potential omissions arising from the desire to summarize its content. Regarding the Monitoring Committee of Resolutions, questions such as the designated members of the committee and the source of its operating funds were raised. As for the members, it was noted that due to the absence of certain categories of actors, this question should be addressed during the presentation of this report. On the other hand, concerning the financing of the functioning of this committee, it was mentioned that leaving the entire burden to the Brainforest organization could be interpreted as a refusal of ownership of the process by the Department. Therefore, it was proposed that the local administration also be involved in this activity, and they could also seek contributions from other key actors operating in the area for resource management (ANPN, WWF, TRIDOM Project, TTIB...). Similarly, some participants felt that this committee should be established as soon as possible, in order to make effective the resolutions already taken, which partly address the issue of community participation in local natural resource management processes. IV- MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION IV-a) Main Recommendations Regarding the recommendations, it is important to specify that they were formulated taking into account the specificities, that is to say, the role and responsibilities of each category of actors. To the Administration and local technical services for natural resource management The following recommendations will be formulated: – Facilitate, as much as possible, the work of civil society organizations on the ground; – Deploy more on the ground not

only to inform communities but also to establish a genuine collaborative relationship with them, which are now recognized both legally and practically as essential actors in the sustainable management of our forest resources; – Take into account the results from mapping activities and participatory research for better community involvement in the management of natural resources in the region; – Develop agreements with communities living on the periphery of the Minkébé West National Park that will seal this new phase of their collaboration; – Ensure equitable sharing of benefits arising from forest exploitation and the valorization of the Protected Area that constitutes the Minkébé National Park. To the logging company TTIB Regarding TTIB, the communities in particular recommended: – Participation in local meetings concerning natural resource management; – Development of an employment policy that includes the recruitment of local labor; – Still related to employment and the use of wood waste, communities wished for a processing plant to be created in Minvoul; – Communities also wished for the TTIB company to comply with Article 251 of the Forestry Code, which speaks of the contribution by the logging operator to the realization of social works in the villages; To civil society organizations and natural resource management projects in general – Communities wished for these organizations to take into account their presence and participation in the implementation of their projects and programs. – Communities also wished for a permanent collaboration to be established among themselves. To the Brainforest organization in particular While encouraging the work carried out by this structure not only to document data concerning resource management by communities but also for holding this multi-actor meeting, the following recommendations will be made to them: – Develop with communities models of memorandum of understanding that will be validated by the administration; – Facilitate the establishment of the monitoring committee for the workshop resolutions; – Continue to inform communities about their rights and interests in natural resource management; – In the context of developing models of agreements, extend the consultation process to other communities in the region that are not involved in the present process but whose activities also take place in the Minkébé forest massif; – Maintain the work dynamic initiated in the region around the issue of natural resource management. – Involve actors such as the TRIDOM Project in the continuation of the process. V- CONCLUSION As can be seen, the Minvoul workshop served as a framework for presenting the mapping work and participatory research conducted by Brainforest on the management of natural resources by some communities living on the periphery of the Minkébé West National Park. Likewise, while highlighting the limiting factors of full community participation in forest management processes, this workshop allowed participants to explain themselves and clearly identify the problems and the different solutions to be adopted in order to resolve them. As the first meeting of its kind to be held in the Haut-Ntem Department, the Minvoul multi-actor workshop also helped to develop a dynamic around the management of natural resources in the Minkébé forest massif among the various concerned actors. Now, it is up to everyone to capitalize on this pilot experience through the effective implementation of the various resolutions taken, in order to meet current challenges. Indeed, the success of the ongoing process largely depends on the willingness that the stakeholders will put into the realization of the formulated recommendations.

23 Workshop Proceedings VI- ANNEX VI-a) Opening Speech by the Program Coordinator of Brainforest (Minvoul, September 4, 2010) Mr. Secretary General of the Haut-Ntem Prefecture, Mr. President of the Departmental Council, Mr. Mayor of the Commune of Minvoul, Ladies and gentlemen representatives of national administrations, Ladies and gentlemen from non-governmental organizations and the private sector, Ladies and gentlemen representatives of Local Communities, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen, It is a great honor and a real

pleasure for me to speak today on the occasion of the opening of the "Joint Workshop on the Contribution of Brainforest to the Implementation of a Concerted Management Framework for Natural Resources in the Minkébé West Forest Massif". Allow me first to thank all the guests who have agreed to suspend their multiple occupations to travel to the commune of Minvoul. Your travels illustrate, if needed, the importance that you, your institutions, and your respective communities place on the sustainable and concerted management of the natural resources of the Minkébé forest massif. Ladies and gentlemen, The sessions that are opening and will solicit your expertise and practical experiences throughout this day are part of a dynamic launched since 2008 by the NGO BRAINFOREST, when it conducted its first missions on the Accelerated Participatory Research Method in the Haut-Ntem Department. This dynamic has continued since 2009, through the implementation in the locality of two projects titled "Participatory Mapping in the Congo Basin" and "Facilitating Community Involvement in National Park Management in Gabon", thanks to the technical and financial support of the Rainforest Foundation UK. It should be noted that these projects are executed in partnership with the various target groups, namely local communities, civil society, administrative authorities, and natural resource managers. Ladies and gentlemen, Through these various initiatives, BRAINFOREST aims to achieve a number of objectives, the most important of which can be summarized as follows: - Regarding the project to facilitate community involvement in national park management, it aims to contribute to the establishment at the local level of management frameworks for national parks that take into account the rights and interests of communities.

 - The participatory mapping project aims to be much broader and has the overall objective of promoting the consideration of the rights of forest communities in legislative, political, and strategic processes regarding access, control, and use of forests. As you can see, the objectives of our activities as outlined align perfectly with the mission that BRAINFOREST has set for itself since its creation in 1998, which is to ‘Inform and support stakeholders for sustainable and equitable management of Gabon's natural resources.’ Ladies and Gentlemen, Sustainable management of forest ecosystems involves a judicious decision-making process regarding the actions to be taken to ensure the sustainability of the ecosystem and its resources. However, for decision-making to be judicious and effective, it must be based on reliable information concerning not only the state of natural resources but also the socio-economic, political, and even cultural environment in which the resources are managed. This means, honorable guests, that the sustainable management of the natural resources of the Minkebe West forest massif necessarily requires a comprehensive understanding of the environmental information of the area. This is only feasible if all actors involved have a framework for consultation that allows them to exchange ideas, with a view to a collective management of the space and the natural resources therein. Thus, it seemed important to us that the various actors involved in the management of Minkebe's resources could capitalize on the mapping work already carried out by local communities. It is also important that these actors initiate an open dialogue on the rules for sustainable management of natural resources that take into account the interests of the different parties. That is why, by initiating this meeting, the overall objective pursued by BRAINFOREST is to contribute to the establishment in the Minvoul area of a framework for concerted management of natural resources that takes into account the rights of local and indigenous communities. Ladies and Gentlemen, The road will certainly still be long and fraught with obstacles before we arrive at a sufficiently solid foundation to guarantee long-term beneficial decisions for all actors in the Minkebe area. What is considered the truth today

may not be so tomorrow, when we have developed new knowledge. We must therefore have the audacity to question our current certainties in order to access the useful information held by others. This quote from Mark Twain, highlighted by Al Gore, Nobel Peace Prize winner in his film on climate change, can inspire us: 'What troubles us is not what we don't know, but what we know for certain that is wrong.' When I see the sum of complementary expertise and experiences gathered in this assembly, I have confidence in our collective capacity for questioning and in the quality of the results we will achieve by the end of our discussions. Our responsibility is heavy, but our task is exhilarating. The implementation of a framework for concerted management of natural resources in the Minkebe West forest massif relies on our discussions and depends on our ability to score a try, and then to transform it. Thank you for your kind attention.

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25 Workshop proceedings VI-b) Opening speech by the Secretary General of the Prefecture of Haut-Ntem, (Minvoul, September 4, 2010) Mr. President of the Haut-Ntem Departmental Council, Mr. Mayor of the Commune of Minvoul, Mr. Coordinator of Brainforest Programs Ladies and Gentlemen representatives of national administrations, Ladies and Gentlemen from non-governmental organizations and the private sector, Ladies and Gentlemen representatives of Local Communities, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is with real pleasure that I today launch the work of the joint workshop regarding Brainforest's contribution to the implementation of a concerted management framework for natural resources in the Minkebe forest massif. This ceremony, it should be noted, also sets the tone for a new form of collaboration between the different stakeholders. I therefore appreciate this type of partnership that activates non-governmental organizations, public administration, the National Parks Agency (ANPN), and local populations. It is important to recall here the place of indigenous and local populations and the role they are called to play in helping the government make the right decisions regarding the respect of their rights concerning natural resources in general and the forest, which is their living environment in particular. The Government, through the Ministry of Water and Forests and the ANPN, fully supports the projects carried out in the Minvoul area by Brainforest. This support is reflected in the participation of agents from the National Parks Agency in the implementation process of these projects and in the participation of technicians in training sessions and other fieldwork undertaken to date. We also appreciate the approach that contributes to strengthening the technical capacities of public administration agents in participatory mapping through the use of new technologies. As you know, several actions taken by the government demonstrate its willingness to consider the aspirations of forest communities. Today, the measures taken by the highest authorities for the sustainable management of forests aim not only at increasing state revenues but increasingly prioritize the approach of preserving them, as they constitute the living environment for several thousand of its citizens who have customary rights over natural resources. Ladies and Gentlemen,

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26 Report of the joint workshop regarding Brainforest's contribution to the implementation of a concerted management framework for natural resources in the Minkebe-West forest massif (Minvoul) Distinguished guests, The project to facilitate the involvement of communities in the management of national parks and that of participatory mapping carried out in our locality by the NGO BRAINFOREST for nearly two years, and whose implementation has led to the present meetings, comes at a time when the government of Emergence led by Prime Minister Paul Biyoghe Mba is implementing programs and projects aimed at substantially improving the living conditions of our fellow citizens. There is no need to recall here the precariousness in which the

populations targeted by the projects carried out by BRAINFOREST live. This is why we must already engage in reflections together so that the next phases to be considered advocate objectives that go beyond the simple decision-making tool that participatory mapping can constitute, for example. Indeed, if the objective of this project is to promote the consideration of the rights of communities to access, control, and use forest resources, it remains that these populations have, in addition to what this project provides, other needs that require sustainable responses. The same applies to the project to facilitate the involvement of communities in the management of national parks. Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished guests, I hereby make an appeal to all stakeholders present and thank in advance all those who would like to join this reflection to help implement a framework for concerted management of natural resources in the Minkebe forest massif. I would also like to ask all of you to set aside your differences and move away from entrenched positions, in order to advance the debates that can only allow us to achieve the objectives assigned to these meetings. Finally, I cannot conclude my remarks without thanking the NGO Brainforest and its partner, the Rainforest Foundation of the Kingdom, which, through such initiatives, contribute in their own way to promoting the Emergence policy driven by His Excellency Ali BONGO ONDIMBA, President of the Republic, Head of State. With that, I officially declare the work of the joint workshop regarding Brainforest's contribution to the implementation of a concerted management framework for natural resources in the Minkebe forest massif open. Thank you.

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27 Workshop Proceedings VI-c) Final Communiqué from the Communities of Minvoul The concept of "management" encompasses several elements, namely accounting, finance, human resources, material resources, etc. As for the term "sustainable," we can define it economically as follows: the exploitation of natural resources by current generations, without compromising their availability for future generations. In summary, concerted sustainable management implies, depending on the context, not only the physical, moral, but also intellectual participation of both parties in the implementation of any process for the exploitation of natural resources while considering future generations. You are undoubtedly aware that the Congo basin in general, and the Minkébé site in particular, currently constitutes one of the world's great lungs in terms of biodiversity. For the people of Minvoul, Minkébé represents a heritage that includes wealth, notably: – The resources necessary for their food – Medicinal plants such as Gnole mot, Essoun, Ogni, Mevine (Ebony) rare trees that can only be found in Minkébé, precisely 75 kilometers from Minvoul. – Sacred sites where rituals were practiced that were not authorized for outsiders, such as Ngui, Bieri, Ezengui... and which still serve as pilgrimage sites today. It is important to note that the last Copenhagen summit on the environment recognized the major role that the Congo basin plays in protecting the ozone layer, which is essential for the survival of planet Earth. Furthermore, the first inhabitants of Gabon, the pygmies, remain a forest people from which they derive their main food products. It is also in this forest that they continue to practice elephant hunting for cultural and ritual reasons. We, the Minvoul community, aware of the role that the Congo basin plays, and specifically the Minkébé-West site in protecting the ozone layer, demand equity in the redistribution of benefits arising from the exploitation of its natural resources. We wish that any implementation of a project concerning the management and exploitation of Minkébé's resources takes into account the various interests of the riparian communities; interests that must be manifested through the following elements: – The recognition of our village and ancestral lands documented within the framework of participatory mapping; – The prior consultation of local and indigenous communities; a permanent collaboration between our communities and the Water and Forests, the

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28 Joint Workshop Report on Brainforest's Contribution to the Implementation of a Concerted Management Framework for Natural Resources in the Minkebe-West Forest Massif (Minvoul) forest operators such as TTIB and any other operator. Also, for the purpose of creating jobs and facilitating our exchanges, we request that a representation of TTIB as well as one of their sawmills be established in Minvoul; – The equitable sharing of financial returns from the Minkébé forests through the establishment of a number of infrastructures such as administrative buildings, roads, schools, hospitals, housing, etc., in order to consider the interests; – The establishment of a permanent consultation framework for the sustainable management of resources in our area; – The authorization to engage in fishing and gathering activities within the Minkébé National Park; Done in Minvoul, on 04/09/2010, The Minvoul Community.

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29 Workshop Proceedings 06/12/2010 PARTICIPATORY MAPPING PROJECT IN THE CONGO BASIN/ GABON COMPONENT Context Current research on deforestation and the mechanisms that can prevent it suggests that securing land tenure and customary rights is one of the most effective ways to protect forests and reduce poverty among forest communities. Currently, there are political, strategic, and legislative processes underway in several countries of the Congo Basin, particularly in Gabon, that could create opportunities to recognize land rights and resource use rights by forest communities. Gabonese forests are of vital biological wealth and constitute an important part of the country's income, but they are also the means of existence for tens of thousands of Gabonese. The forestry code 16/01, the law on national parks, etc. offer forest communities opportunities for greater participation in the management of natural resources. Participatory mapping is aimed at enlightening or possibly influencing the ongoing processes regarding resource management. Participatory Mapping Project in the Congo Basin The overall goal of the Participatory Mapping Project in the Congo Basin is to promote the consideration of the rights of forest communities in legislative, political, and strategic processes regarding access, control, and use of forests. Specific Objectives Strengthen the capacities of local communities including indigenous peoples, civil society members, and state agents in participatory mapping; Produce participatory maps; Use the participatory maps produced in negotiations and decision-making in favor of forest preservation and the interests of forest communities. Methodological Approach Participatory mapping is a process composed of seven (7) steps: Pre-prospecting Prospecting GPS data collection Supporting communities in collecting GPS data of their usage areas Validation of participatory maps Training communities in negotiation techniques and establishing lobbying strategies Organizing multi-stakeholder exchange frameworks Monitoring the functioning of local consultation frameworks and the implementation of their recommendations Mid-term Results .....Capacity strengthening To date, 38 people from diverse professional backgrounds have been trained to be facilitators of the project, among whom six (6) have received training in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Public Administrations International NGOs 39%39% Gabonese Civil Society 53%53% 8%8% VI-d) Presentations

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30 Joint Workshop Report on Brainforest's Contribution to the Implementation of a Concerted Management Framework for Natural Resources in the Minkebe-West Forest Massif (Minvoul) 06/12/2010 55 community members (local cartographers) have been trained in the manipulation and use of GPS Participatory Map Production To date, 15 participatory maps of natural resource uses have been produced, of which 11 have been validated by the communities. 6 7 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Estuary N'gounié Ogooué Ivindo Woleu N'tem Some comments cited by the

communities "This is the first time we meet people who protect animals and who help us with our rights" by Mr. NOUB Arnaud, chief of the village Mayibouth 1 (Ogooué Ivindo) "The project is good because from the maps we will know the limits of the park and the buffer zone" by the inhabitants of Mekob (Ogooué Ivindo)

31 Workshop Proceedings 06/12/2010 1 FINAL REPORT OF PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN THE VILLAGES OF DOUMASSI, BITOUGA, ETO'O AND ELARMINTANG, LOCATED IN THE PERIPHERY OF THE MINKÉBÉ WEST NATIONAL PARK Research was conducted in the villages of Elarmintang, Doumassi, Eto'o, and Bitouga. These villages are located in the city of Minvoul (Woleu-Ntem), which is the capital of the Haut-Ntem Department and is inhabited by Fang, Baka, and Bekekep populations. The city houses the western part of the Minkébé National Park, a portion of the TTIB forest concession and TRIDOM. Context Collect relevant data (Socio-economic) on the communities of the villages of Doumassi, Eto'o, Bitouga, and Elarmintang; Document the involvement of communities in the management of the national park and the interaction that exists between the communities and other forest managers; Objectives of the work Exchange with administrative authorities and forest managers on the current local system of natural resource management; Reflect with various stakeholders on the possibility of implementing a concerted management framework for natural resources Work conducted with: The communities; The administrative authorities of Minvoul; An organization promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples based in Minvoul. Methodology Problems of understanding in some villages; Access not always easy to sensitive data such as that concerning the practice of large game hunting; Absence during the validation mission in some villages of certain resource persons; Unavailability of administrative authorities during the validation mission due to the holding of the budget session; A misunderstanding that occurred in Elarmintang during the validation phase was a major obstacle to continuing the work in this community. Difficulties encountered Among the Baka Organization into clans; Patrilineal kinship Seeking consensus; Exclusion of women during decision-making. Among the Fang Organization into clans; Patrilineal kinship; Consensus decision-making; Consultation of women during decision-making.

32 Report of the joint workshop regarding Brainforest's contribution to the implementation of a concerted management framework for natural resources in the Minkebe-west forest massif (Minvoul) 06/12/2010 2 Main activities: Hunting Fishing Agriculture Gathering/collecting Subsidiary activities: Gold extraction Sand quarrying Community activities Hunting: from the outskirts of the village to a distance of more than 50km; Agriculture: on the outskirts of the villages and extending to a distance not exceeding 5km; Fishing: mainly on the Ntem and Ayia rivers; Gathering: same areas as agriculture and hunting. Activity zones In the park Increased poaching practices due to the cross-border nature of the Minkébé park; Strong presence of populations of various nationalities at the gold panning site in Minkébé Anthropic threats to resources Lack of consultation with communities during the creation of the park; Absence of demarcation of the national park boundaries and its peripheral zone; Low information for communities on the concept of the measures planned for its management; Conflicts over access to resources. Current status of community rights in park management Creation of a framework for dialogue and consultation at the local level; Recognition of village territories, enhancement of customary rights, and establishment of a co-management system; Development of alternatives to hunting with communities; Demarcation of the park boundaries; demarcation and materialization of the buffer zone and the peripheral zone of the national park; Strengthening the capacities of local populations in natural resource management. Main recommendations Thank you

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33 Workshop proceedings VI-e) PARTICIPANTS □ □- Administrative authorities □ □Secretary General of the Haut-Ntem Department □ □Mayor □ □President of the Departmental Council □ □ Brigade Commander □ □- Decentralized Technical Services □ □Water and Forests Department □ □Conservators of the Minkébé National Park □ □- NGOs □ □WWF Oyem □ □Brainforest □ □Ariga □ □Edzengui □ □- Local populations □ □Population from the neighborhoods and villages of Eto’o, Evela, Doumassi, Elarmintang, and Bitouga □ □Chiefs of Cantons □ □Elites of Minvoul

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