

**FINAL REPORT ON THE MISSION TO CENTRAL AFRICA**  
**CAMEROON, CHAD, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, CONGO BRAZZAVILLE,**  
**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

**19/07/09 - 12/08/09**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of the mission conducted in the five (5) countries of Central Africa was to assess the situation facing existing Greens parties and Greens, become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and exchange information on Greens activities in Africa.

The ultimate aim of this mission is to help not only achieve a better organization of Greens in the region but also boost current Greens parties and Greens and strengthen them, so they can participate effectively in the Congress of Kampala and in consolidating African Greens organization.

The mission began on 19th July with a trip to Nigeria (ABUJA) to obtain the entry visa for Cameroon (first phase of the mission). I got the visa on 21st July. This unavoidable détour for the entry visa for Cameroon not only cost money but also time that could have been saved if the visa had been issued directly at Douala airport .

However, this is part of the geo-political reality of Central Africa, where free movement of people and goods remain major problems. This reveals a weak level of political and economic integration, compared to the West African Economic Community (CEDEAO).

Apart from Cameroon and Congo Brazzaville where our colleagues leading Greens parties were not present, the mission followed the set calendar (see the program sent out by Frank Habineza ).

### **1. CAMEROON (22.07.09 - 23.07.09)**

#### **1.1 Observations**

Emails were sent to the following Greens leaders in Cameroon to prepare the mission :

- Jean Nke N'Dih and,Elouga Martin of the «Cameroon Environmental Defense» party or DEC;
- Pierre Fritz Ngo of the «Cameroon Greens Movement» or MEC;
- Eric **Dombo**, young Green from Cameroon.

The result was that nobody out there replied on behalf of these Greens organizations.

In Douala, the visit to MEC's address (at 961 avenue King Akwa) led me to believe that these premises are now occupied by the "**NEAT**" company selling cars. It has replaced the "**Brazza**

**Food”** shop formerly at this address. This means the MEC has moved without leaving a forwarding address.

Reliable information gathered on the ground from leaders of certain street-wise political parties in Douala indicates that these Greens parties are inactive on the national political chess board.

## **1.2 Recommendations**

It is urgent that Greens parties already located in Cameroon make themselves visible on the ground, by having verifiable physical addresses and/or phone numbers at any time so that the African Greens and active Greens parties in the region may contact them, not only to organize the Central African Greens, but also to include them when the next African Greens Congress is held in Kampala in March 2010. Furthermore, numerous Greens sympathizers are waiting impatiently for Greens parties to return to the political scene and harness Greens activists working in environmental conservation organizations and potential political leaders capable of setting up and maintaining a Greens party.

## **2. CHAD (23.07.09 - 31.07.09)**



## 2.1 Observations

The visit to Chad (N'Djaména) allowed me to:

- Visit the headquarters of the « **Union of Chad Greens party UET/The Greens** »;
- Meet and talk to members of the Executive Bureau of the Chad Greens party;
- Meet and talk to Chad NGOs and local media;
- Meet and talk to the General Secretary of the Environment Ministry ;
- Meet and talk to the Coordinator of the Program to extend the Green Belt.

### 2.1.2 Visit to the party headquarters

The headquarters is located in the same building as the home of the Secretary General of the party. It comprises a single room, equipped with a computer and some furniture enabling the Executive Bureau to work. A large sign on the street corner indicates where the headquarters is located ( see photo).

### 2.1.3 Talks with the Executive Bureau

Those members of the Executive Bureau present began by introducing themselves. Then, we talked about the aim of the mission and they talked about their party.

#### **Aims of the mission:**

- **Brief historical recap of the Greens movement in Africa.**
- **Decisions made at the African Greens conference in Sao Paulo (see report) as follows:**
  - ✓ Election of three representatives of the African Greens on the Global Greens Coordination (GGC) who are: Frank Habineza, Juliana Mugure and Adamou Garba.
  - ✓ Setting up Regional Federations of Greens parties and Greens, modeled on the Federation of Greens Parties and Greens in West Africa (FÉPEV-RAO)
  - ✓ Organizing the African Greens Congress in Kampala in 2010
- **Results of the Preparatory Meeting of the Congress, in Bohicon:**

These results are as follows:

- ✓ Adoption of the draft Charter of the African Greens ( see African Greens network documents on the internet)

- ✓ Adoption of the draft Constitution of the African Greens Organization (see African Greens network documents on the internet)
- ✓ Adoption of the draft Standing Orders of the African Greens Organization (see African Greens network documents on the internet.)
- ✓ Setting up the Steering Committee of the Organization (see African Greens network documents on the internet)

- **Presentation of the «Union of Chad Greens UET/ The Greens» party**

- ✓ Founded in September 2005

Documents (Constitutional Statutes and Standing Orders) sent by email.

The party is led by a dynamic team with a lot of young people working at break-neck speed to spread over the whole national territory. It plans to present candidates at the next legislative elections. The Union of Chad Greens can rely on the services of young computer experts to manage a mailing list.

Its Secretary General was present at the meeting in Bohicon. He is part of the Steering Committee of the African Greens Organization.

**2.1.3. Meeting with NGOs and local media**

This meeting took place in the offices of COSSOCIM.

This meeting allowed us to exchange information on:

- the great environmental challenges in the region;
- the activities of the African Greens;
- preparations for the Congress of Kampala in March 2010
- cooperation between the Chad Greens Party, NGOs and other Greens organizations.

Aware that their actions to safeguard the environment complement each others, these organizations have decided to set up a Chad Greens Forum as a common framework for discussion and work.

**2.1.4. Meeting with the Secretary General of the Environment Ministry**

Mr Dounia Sandjima, who is also President of the African Group regarding the Convention on Desertification received us at his home, just as he was about to leave on a mission to Tunis.

During this meeting, we discussed the Program to Extend the Green Belt of N'Djaména, which will be a vital link in the combat against desertification initiated by the New Partnership for the Development of Africa ( NEPAD ), within the framework of the Great Green Wall project going from Mauritania to Djibouti.

Whilst congratulating himself on setting up the Chad Greens Union, the Secretary General was also working with Chad Greens on implementing this Green Belt Program as well as other projects related to environmental conservation. He thereby have instructions to the Coordinator of the Green Belt Program to receive us and show us around what is currently going on.

### **2.1.5. Meeting with the Coordinator of the Green Belt Program**

After this meeting, a site visit was planned. However, this did not eventuate.

### **2.2 Recommendations :**

The Chad Greens Union, NGOs and Greens Associations in Chad should set up the Chad Greens Forum.

Set up a mailing- list of Greens in Central Africa to be co-managed by the Chad Greens Union.

Maintain relations with authorities in charge of the environment for a better follow-up on issues and relevant people.

### **3. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (31.07.09 -1.08.09)**



### **3.1 Observations**

Once I arrived in Bangui, three of us had a chat: Mr Laurent- Avit BOKONAS, President of the Greens Movement of Central Africa (MVC), the Secretary General of the MVC Mr Gabriel N'Boussa and myself to explain the aim of my mission and prepare the work schedule together.

During my visit to Bangui I was able to meeting leaders in the Political Bureau of the «Central African Greens Movement» and also leaders of environmental NGOs and some media representatives.

#### **3.1.1 Meeting with environmental NGOs and the local press**

The meeting took place in the National Hotel in Bangui. Several NGOs and journalists accepted the invitation of Mr Laurent-Avit Bokonas (President of the MVC). On this meeting's agenda were:

- setting up a federation of Central African Greens parties;
- the African Greens congress in 2010 in Kampala;
- capacity-building of the Central African Greens;

-strengthening the partnership between the MVC party and environmental NGOs.

Just as in Chad this meeting with Civil Society was an opportunity to spread information widely about African Greens' activities and future plans. This meant that Greens parties would become better known.

In the work session invited guests expressed their concerns about current environmental challenges, from deforestation to clean-ups, particularly the phenomenon of plastic bags all over the place in urban centres.

They also followed my talk about the struggle Greens parties in Africa and all over the world have taken on, common topics, and the process towards consolidation, with great interest.

After some constructive criticism of the MVC party, participants said they were definitely keen to join forces with the Central African Greens in environmental conservation and sustainable development in Central Africa.

### **3.2 Meeting with the Political Bureau of the MVC**

We met in Fatima (6th district) in the home of the President which also serves as the party's temporary office. The president was joined for the occasion by the Vice-president, Secretary General, General Treasurer, a woman leader and a young person.

After the usual introductions, Mr BOKONAS congratulated us on this good initiative to visit them and put our finger on the pulse of life in Central Africa, thus giving him a chance to talk about the problems his party is facing.

Whilst re-affirming their political will and total willingness to position Greens politics in the Central African Republic, Mr BOKONAS strongly emphasized that the party had only weak financial means with which to meet their political obligations. This is why, he added that they had not attended any major meetings of the African Greens or Global Greens. Collaboration between political and administrative authorities dealing with environment and the Greens is not what the party leaders would like it to be.

The President hoped that a visit like ours would mention strengthen the capacity of the MVC.

#### **3.2.1 Introducing the MVC**

The party was set up in 1999. Its President is a former councillor of the 6th district, elected in 1993.

Although the party had supported the candidacy of the current President of the Republic, its leaders are complaining about being marginalized from power and not being consulted on or associated with any environmental conservation action that government authorities take.

The MV is a party that meets all the administrative requirements, and has available all necessary documents to allow it to run its activities.

#### **3.2.2 Discussions on the activities of the African Greens**

The second part of talks focussed on information exchange about decisions made by the Conference of African Greens held in Sao Paulo and the preparatory meeting of the African Greens Congress held in Bohicon in Benin. Meetings that the MVC did not attend. Just as with the Political Bureau of the Chad Greens, we shared with the Central African Greens all the information they needed, so as to have the same level of knowledge as other Greens in Africa. All documents have been emailed to them.

During my talk, I recalled that the four (4) regions of the African continent: West Africa, North Africa and Egypt, Central Africa, East and South Africa and Indian Ocean countries should organize themselves into federations so they can appoint legitimate representatives to be regional spokespeople.

In March 2010, representatives of Greens parties and movements, and young Greens on the continent will hold their Congress in Uganda to take decisions to shape the future of the African Greens. Already an African Greens organizational Steering Committee was set up in Bohicon (see the Bohicon report).

In reply to their many concerns, especially the need for financial resources, it was decided that the Greens in Africa would set up the African Greens Organization, to be registered in Nairobi in Kenya. Once it is internationally recognized, this organization will be able to dedicate itself to helping mobilize funding , so that every member can conduct its activities properly.

### **3.2.3 Recommendations**

We recommend that the MVC:

- reactivate existing party structures
- recruit new activists
- renew relations with NGOs
- renew contacts with government departments dealing with the environment
- re-establish relations with the press by issuing press releases

## **4. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

In the Democratic Republic of Congo there are two Greens parties:

- The Congo Greens Assembly (REC);
- The Congo Greens Party (PECO).

### **4.1 Observations**

#### **4.1.1 Meeting with PECO (Congo Greens Party)**



4.1.2 Visit to PECO's headquarters at 66 avenue de l'Enseignement opposite the Omnisport Stadium in Kinshasa (see photo). This is an imposing building comprising several offices, a meeting room and a courtyard where gazebos have been erected for training workshops.

#### 4.1.3 Meeting with PECO's leaders

This meeting took place at PECO's headquarters, with the following main leaders of PECO:

- Mr Pembe Didace Bokiaga, National President
- Pierre Mpia Mopendo, General Secretary
- Pastor Leonard Muamba Kanda
- Wassa Romuald, founding member of PECO

This first meeting to establish contact was a chance to explain the objectives of the mission, check out the situation facing existing Greens parties and Greens and talk about African Greens' activities, be informed about parties visited and take on board their concerns. This meeting was a chance to lay cards on the table and prepare the work schedule with PECO leaders.

**4.1.4 Work meeting** with the general secretary, general secretary administration and Mr Wassa, founding member of PECO.

This meeting followed the same process as in Chad and Central Africa, giving leaders all the following information:

General information on the African Greens

Decisions made at the African Greens Conference in Sao Paulo

Preparatory meeting in Bohicon

Organizing the Congress in Kampala

This preparatory meeting allowed us to convey the big picture of everything the African Greens are doing, and highlight their short –term objectives and medium-term objectives. The main idea is that by giving them the means they need to act politically and by improving regional and continental organization, we will promote unified action by the African Greens. This means that in each African region the Greens must structure themselves by forming a regional Federation of Greens parties and movements. And alongside each federation, a young Greens organization should emerge which should also join the young greens federation at continental level. This process should equip us with a formal framework at continental level for discussion and collaboration, so we can make Greens politics a reality in Africa.

This is the motivation behind setting up the African Greens Movement, whose initial draft documents were discussed in Bohicon. The wheels have already been set in motion. When the African Greens Congress is held in March 2010 in Kampala, the African Greens’ political desire to take a great leap forward will have materialized. That’s why all the Greens parties, Greens movements and Young Greens on the African continent must attend. PECO’s leaders were happy to receive and have understood this message.

#### **4.1.5 Attended a technical committee meeting on recycling plastic bags.**

This meeting presided by the General Secretary of PECO dealt with the plastic bag collection operation organized by PECO. We discussed the following points :

-experiences in Niger with recycling plastic bags: how to sort and purchase bags? When did this start in Niger? Who should they contact?

which strategy should they adopt to discuss this issue with the governor of Kinshasa. What should they do with the bags already collected (15, 000 dollars invested) ?

This meeting was an overview of PECO's activities on the ground. This kind of discussion could continue with other organizations that are active in similar fields cooperating at regional level.

#### **4.1.6 Meeting with the political bureau of PECO**

The meeting, presided by the General Secretary of PECO was held at party headquarters, to exchange information about the African Greens , just as I had done with the main leaders of PECO.

As for the past, we gave Political Bureau members the same information other Greens in Africa had about decisions made by the African Conference in Sao Paulo and the Preparatory meeting in Bohicon. As for the future, main topics were setting up the Federation of Central African Greens Parties and Greens, and the African Greens Congress in Kampala.

PECO wants to take an active part in the regional and continental process. Therefore, it is keen to work with the REC not only nationally to consolidate the Greens' presence in Congo politics, but also regionally, as part of Central Africa, so together they can be a driving force.

#### **-Introducing PECO**

The party was set up in 2008. Its President is a former government Environment Minister.

PECO is well-structured and solidly organized. It is consolidating its presence locally, regionally and nationally by continually training activists, especially young people on a daily basis.

All required administrative documents to prove the existence and regular functioning of the party are available:

#### **4.2. Meeting with the REC**



## **4.2 Observations**

### **4.2.1 Visit to the temporary office of the REC in the LEMBE district**

### **4.2. 2 Meeting with the Executive Bureau of the REC**

### **4.2.3 Introducing the REC**

The meeting was held in the temporary office located in the home of the Green Deputy, Mr Ruffin Mpaka.

After thorough introductions by all the members of the Executive Bureau present, Mr Ruffin Mpaka, Preident of the REC began by asking us the aim of our mission. Then he told us the REC was set up in 2004, when the REC held a Convention allowing all African Greens parties in Central Africa to come together. In his speech, Mr Ruffin Mpaka developed and defended the strategy he adopted to position the party. Firstly, he chose to prioritize the party's national activities. Then he focussed his efforts on the electorate where he was a candidate. Finally, he set out to patiently construct the financial base allowing him to support the party's actions.

The REC participated in the 2006 elections and he was successfully elected in the electorate of Kimvula (Lower Congo) as the first Greens deputy in the Democratic Congo.

For the provincial elections in the city of Kinshasa, the party arranged an alliance: «Entente of Socialists, Greens and Allies», with the Deputy Ruffin Mpaka and Mr Christian Badibangi, President of the Congo Socialist Union heading the ticket.

The party also participated in the referendum on 18 December 2005 by calling on people to vote No for reasons summarized in 10 points, see the brochure: «10 Reasons to Vote No».

The party used to have a website, but it's not working any more. However, Mr Ruffin Mpaka intends to reactivate it.

The REC has all the documents proving its official recognition.

#### **4.2.4 Discussion on African Greens activities**

Continuing his comments, Mr Ruffin Mpaka also gave his view on the Dakar Congress and events that followed. In his view, the executive bureau set up at that time is still legitimate. He added that considering the new situation, we should work out a compromise.

I explained the objectives of this mission, as I had in other countries and to the various executive committees of the Greens parties I'd met.

So far, explanations were clear.

Nevertheless, I needed to clarify certain points:

- 1) Concerning the participation of African delegates at the African Greens Conference held in Brazil, Mr Mpaka pointed out that he wanted to buy his ticket. However, he had hoped that one or two members of his party could have had their tickets for this trip paid for. Which did not happen.

Having taken part in the procedure to select candidates without sufficient funds to make the trip to Brazil, I explained a few things to Mr Mpaka. Information that everyone would find useful. In fact, a Committee comprising members of the Global Greens Coordination (GGC) and representatives of Greens Foundations (Green Forum and the Heinrich Boell Foundation) had participated in selecting candidates based on certain fixed criteria. The procedure had been transparent from start to finish.

- 2) Concerning the Dakar Congress and the legitimacy of the resulting executive. I had said that Mr Ruffin should moderate his point of view for several reasons. Firstly, several parties did not participate in the voting and therefore did not recognize this executive. Then, the executive's mandate was for two years and after three consecutive mandates the executive had still not arranged a Congress. Finally, the African Greens Conference held in Brazil assembled over 40 participants representing more countries than were present at the Dakar Congress. Therefore a new legitimacy. In addition, I provided some information proving that I

had suggested ways of getting out of the crisis, but no-one had taken my advice. Also, there is objective evidence that the departing executive did not have the power to prevent the new executive from receiving funding from foundations.

In short, the global situation has changed and so have the players. Consequently, we can't go backwards.

It emerged from discussions, that the REC and PECO will be able to work together, for greater strength nationally and to play a leading role regionally. They just need to establish official contact between the two parties, whose leaders already know each other.

#### **4.2.5 Recommendations**

- To REC and PECO, to make a strategic relationships to coordonate their national and regional activities.

- To Mr Ruffin Npaka Président of REC to be the facilitator of the Greens parties in Central Africa.

## **5. CONGO BRAZZAVILLE**



### 5.1 Observations

No direct contact was made with the Greens party, although emails were sent. Mr Ruffin Mpaka was only able to make a brief phone call to Younnous Madzengue on Tuesday 4 August 2009. This phone call was not enough to organize a meeting with the leaders of the Congo Brazzaville Greens Party leaders.

It should be noted, however that in Brazzaville on 9th August I was able to meet Mrs Georgette Ingani who works at CREPA of Congo. A keen environmental activist, Mrs Georgette Ingani has been trying for several years to get in contact with leaders of the Greens party in Congo Brazzaville, to make her contribution to strengthening the party.

### 5.2 Recommendations

It is urgent that the Greens party already located in Congo Brazzaville be more visible on the ground. Its leaders should renew the means of direct contact. Everyone is keen to see the return of this Greens party to the national political scene.

## 6. GENERAL CONCLUSION

### 6.1 General observations

The Central African region is difficult to access due to:

- Weak political and economic integration causing a major problem moving people and goods.
- Recurring problems accessing energy, such as power cuts limiting Internet access.
- Unreliable flights in the region.

## **6.2 Observations of Greens parties**

There is a noticeable :

- weak dialogue between Greens in the region reflected in rare regional meetings (RED convention in 2004) , from 1994 up until now.
- Weak representation at international meetings (one delegate in Sao Paulo, one at the preparatory meeting in Bohicon)

The mission to Central Africa: Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Democratic Congo and Congo Brazzaville was a chance to verify existing Greens parties and Greens first hand and assess their strengths and weaknesses. I was also able to share information with these party leaders about the African Greens and the future of Greens politics in Africa.

This mission will in the short term, lay the foundations of a reorganization of Greens in the Region, by strengthening regional information exchange through a mailing list and setting up a Regional federation of Greens Parties if possible, before the Congress in Kampala.

Also, the ultimate aim of this mission is to take action and clearly show Greens solidarity to support any Greens parties in need.

### **General recommendations**

- set up a Yahoo or Goodle group (mailing list) for the region.
- organize a Central African Greens congress if possible before the end of the year.