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إفريقيا وتحديات القرن الواحد والعشرين

**Environmental Communication and Forest Governance
Strategy for Sustainable Management in Cameroon:
The Case of Anglophone Cameroon**

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Abstract

Cameroon's forests resources are estimated to cover 22 million hectares, of which 14 million are tropical forest and 8 million in the Savanna biome. She has the second forest reserve in terms of surface area after the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as the second biodiversity reserve after Madagascar. The forests provide a wide range of products and services to the population, particularly the rural poor. However, forests and ecosystems are being degraded through exploitative logging, fuel wood demands, clearing for agricultural activities, overgrazing and fires. It has been estimated that about 200,000 hectares of forests are lost every year to these activities, of which 75,000 to 95,000 hectares are taken up by shifting cultivation alone. These notwithstanding, poverty remains widespread in Cameroon because of the falling commodity prices in world market. In a bid to mitigate non-sustainable exploitation of forest resources, the government of Cameroon, in the early 1990s introduced new forestry policy reforms at the behest of the World Bank. Although the reforms marked an important mile stone in the forestry domain in Cameroon, the intended objective has, to a large extent not be attained owing to poor environmental communication and forest governance strategy. The resultant consequences have been the continuous erosion of our rich forest and cultural heritage through the continuous degradation and deforestation of our forest resource base. Against this backdrop and associated challenges, this paper, through a qualitative and quantitative methods seek to reconstruct a valid environmental communication criteria for sustainable forest management of which good forest governance practices constitute a mainstay. The outcome of this novel approach will be beneficial not only to Cameroon, but would provide a free ride to other African countries whose forest resource are facing similar or same challenges.

Keywords: Environmental Communication, Forest Governance, strategy, Sustainable Management, Cameroon, Anglophone Cameroon