

PRESS RELEASE:

A Milestone for ABS in Cameroon:

Signing of Two Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT) between a major European company and the local Community of Pimbo at the Hilton Hotel in Yaoundé.

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Minister of Environment Nature Protection and Sustainable Development Pierre Hélé is handing over the MAT Agreements to His Royal Highness Ndjehemle Narcis Pegwo, the Mayor of Ngambe Simon Pierre Bimai, and Eleazard Bayick, representing the Pimbo community; July 21, 2021, Yaoundé © GIZ

There were roughly 50 participants who assisted both online and offline in the solemn signing event of the MAT agreements by the local community Pimbo under the supervision of His Excellency, the Minister of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development this Wednesday, July 21st, 2021 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, in the Yaoundé Hilton Hotel.

Among the participants were representatives of the European company, the local community, the Ministry of the Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED), project representatives of BioInnovation Africa, the German Embassy in Cameroon and the GIZ Country Director.

After almost two years of negotiations, the signing of two Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT) between the local community of Pimbo, and a European fragrance and taste company represents an important milestone and demonstrates the practical implementation of Access and Benefit-Sharing in Cameroon (ABS). The MATS are legally binding agreements ensuring that “the user” (the company) will share parts of its benefits deriving from the use of two genetic resources with “the provider” (the local community), who in return will ensure that access to the resource is provided as agreed upon.

"We look forward to making a positive impact for the community of Pimbo in the years to come by supporting, among other things, training for project management, development of local schools, and empowerment of women in agriculture," said the representative of the company that will use the biological resources for research purposes.

The political framework of ABS goes back to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. The Convention has three objectives: (i) the conservation of biodiversity; (ii) the sustainable use of its components; and (iii) Access and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits (ABS) arising from the utilisation of natural resources. With regards to the third objective, the Nagoya Protocol on ABS was signed in 2010 in Nagoya, Japan and entered into force in 2014.

Cameroon, aware of its rich biological diversity, ratified the CBD in 1994, signed the Nagoya Protocol in July 2014, and became a Party to it in 2017. The country has put in place an ABS legislative and regulatory framework. In fact, the related law has been promulgated on Friday 9th July 2021 by the Head of State after adoption by the National Assembly and the Senate.

Cameroon has received financial support from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for the implementation of the project entitled "BioInnovation Africa - Equitable Benefit Sharing for Biodiversity Conservation" implemented by GIZ GmbH with the aim of developing Euro-African cooperation for biodiversity-based innovations and products, and fair and equitable benefit-sharing for biodiversity conservation. The project has supported the development of the partnership between the local community and the international company from its beginnings.