Project Update: June 2017

A total of 40 fully identified species or morphospecies of millipedes were recorded in the littoral forest of Cameroon belong to 20 genera, 12 families and four orders. This makes a total of 40 (22+18) species, including those from the first record in the former report update (February 2017). It is noteworthy that the latest fieldwork mainly covered the dry season, with the family Odontopygidae, in particular, *Trychochaleponcus* sp. 1 being the dominant in terms of abundance in the highly disturbed forest of Yansoki.

Laciniogonus sp.

Trychochaleponcus sp. 1

Several species belonging to the genus *Monachodesmus* (Polydesmida: Pyrgodesmidae) collected during that field period are new to science and will shortly be described.

The first, and probably new, species of the family Campodesmidae, with its sole genus *Campodesmus*, is recorded from Cameroon for the first time, also found in the same highly disturbed and degraded forest of Yansoki.

During this few-month long season in the field, we note that bush fire seems to be the greatest threat that affects millipede populations. We record a great number of millipede species in any large stretch of land after slash and burn.

Slash and burn practice in Yansoki

Pachybolus tectus recorded after fire

In this connection; shifting to after fire cultivation is common in most of the forested regions of Cameroon, including that of our study area. In addition to that, the Littoral Evergreen Forest Region supports several badly exploited hardwood species, as well as a number large farms. All these pressures are reflected in the structure of diplopod communities.

Forest degradation for industrial exploitation of pineapple near Ekite

As an example, preliminary analyses of our results reveal that in Cameroon's coastal forests the species richness of millipedes is strongly decreased with environmental degradation, both forest and open-land habitats (fallow land, fields etc.). This situation leads to a marked change in the structure of diplopod communities, with invasive species becoming more and more dominant in wildlife at the expense of specialist species, both in terms of species richness and abundance.