

Project Update : December 2012

On 7th December 2012, an awareness session was held in the office of the natural reserve of Bururi for women using the natural resources of the forest and the Batwa of Bururi. Twelve Batwa and 35 women participated in the meeting which was enhanced by the presence of the Mayor of the commune of Bururi. Outputs of this meeting are the following recommendations :

- Do not cut trees, collect only dead wood from the ground.
- Organise an urgent meeting to discuss how the Batwa, who are 100% dependent on the forest, should continue to use certain forest resources without putting in danger the forest.
- For any need in relation to the forest resources, the community now must contact conservation services.

In order to implement these recommendations of, a meeting with the Batwa was organised on 10th December 2012 in their village to agree on the right way to use some natural resources of the Bururi forest. We made the following agreements:

- Regarding firewood, Batwa will now be accompanied by rangers to show how they take what they need.
- Only branches of exotic species will be cut.
- There will be no more trees cut up, especially native species.
- For women who cut straw for sale from breeders who use litter, they will now follow instructions of rangers.
- Batwa promised not to extract quarries (stone and sand) in the reserve.
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At the same time, a journalist of the national radio and television, who presents the broadcast of "Protecting the environment", gave a microphone to the representatives of communities bordering the natural reserve forest of Bururi, the representatives of the Batwa and Mayor of the commune of Bururi to discuss the integration of populations in the protection of natural forest reserve of Bururi. Everyone emphasised the good cooperation that exists at the moment between the administration on the one hand, and local communities, the Batwa in particular, with the services of the conservation management in

the protection of this natural ecosystem through awareness-raising activities since July 2011, when the first RSGF funding was granted to restore the physical integrity of the forest.

This broadcast did not fail to mention the problem of lack of land for the Batwa with the consequence of the entire dependence on natural resources of the reserve. This 30-minute broadcast has already been replayed more than four times on the airwaves of National Radio of Burundi. Its echoes were heard : one of the two groups of Batwa living on the edge of the forest of Bururi has got a property of 20 ha which was granted by a Swedish woman after purchase by a third party. She will build their homes and help them to integrate socially. Construction of houses and water supply are starting. Sanitisation of all stakeholders involved in the protection of the natural forest of Bururi will continue because its fruits are now harvested.