



# GUINEA: CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION IN A WEST AFRICAN WILDLIFE HOTSPOT

*"The Centre Forestier de N'Zérékoré aims to conserve and sustainably manage the biological diversity of a network of protected areas consisting of one cross-border biosphere reserve and six classified forests covering a total area of 247,000 hectares while supporting the socio-economic development of the 150,000 inhabitants of the riparian zones. These protected areas of dense rainforests, which extend from Guinea to Togo, are today the most important reservoirs of rare or endangered species in our country. But **the money that is spent in major international meetings would save more than half of the planet if it is directed towards the field. Someone once said that 'conservation without means is a conversation' plain and simple. It's time to take action, otherwise tomorrow will be too late.**"*



**Watta Camara, Centre Forestier de N'Zérékoré, Guinea**

Guinea is a global biodiversity hotspot, containing important remnants of the Upper Guinean Forest that once covered the whole of West Africa. Elephants, chimpanzees and many more endangered species all rely on this unique habitat. Here, the forest acts as a watershed for some of the region's major rivers and is therefore crucial not only for biodiversity, but for the health and well-being of millions of people.

Fauna & Flora International is focusing on conserving what remains of the Upper Guinean Forest in Guinea. Situated along the border with Liberia, this forest is rich in endemic and endangered species, but is also at risk from extreme and immediate threats, such as agricultural expansion, mining and poaching – driven in large part by poverty and exponential population growth.

Since 2009, we have been working with the Centre Forestier de N'Zérékoré (CFZ) in the Zياما Man and Biosphere Reserve to combat elephant poaching and alleviate human-elephant conflict. We work in collaboration with the local community and our partner organisations to ensure that Zياما is co-managed effectively, supporting viable populations of threatened species while remaining equitably beneficial to the local population who rely upon it for subsistence.

Part of our work with local communities includes implementing measures to deter elephants from crop-raiding, such as agricultural buffer zones around villages, growing foods unpalatable to elephants and using bees as a natural repellent. Ultimately, the fate of elephants and other wildlife throughout the Upper Guinean Forest will depend on the communities who live closest to them.