



**KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE
MEDIA ROUND TABLE**

INTENSIFYING PARTNERSHIPS IN AFRICAN FORESTRY

MEDIA BRIEF

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Intensifying partnerships in African forestry

The African Forest Forum (AFF) will hold two round table discussions with the media during a regional workshop on “*Sharing of knowledge and experiences to strengthen collaboration among stakeholders in African forestry*” that will be held from 26 to 30 September 2016 at the Hotel Novela Star in Lome Togo.

The media roundtable discussions will provide direct interaction between journalists, forestry experts, policymakers, training institutions, private sector, NGOs and others on priority and emerging issues on sustainable forest management (SFM) and resilience to climate change by forests and trees as well as the people who depend on these resources. The session - led by a panel of international experts - will detail successful results obtained by AFF and partners during the last two years from its work and provide information on the following issues:



A Tammar house in Koutammakou, Land of the Batammariba and a UNESCO World Heritage site in Togo. Photo credits: [Erik Kristensen](#)/Wikipedia

1. Managing forests for improved livelihoods and environment under climate change. The workshop will discuss issues on forest restoration; forest resilience to climate change; vulnerability to climate change on women, youth and marginalized groups in various forest types; key elements of the forest sector that have potential to contribute to green economy; disaster risk reduction as it relates to forests and trees

2. Building SFM in Africa: key areas that continue to receive inadequate attention, apart from climate change, and are critical for raising healthy African forests. Roundtable discussions will revolve around issues related to the state of forest and tree germ plasm on the continent, handling of pests and diseases related to trees and forests in Africa, and some aspects of good forest governance and law enforcement.

3. Experiences and lessons with handling climate change in African forestry. The discussions around this theme will include some aspects of mitigation and adaptation in African forestry (e.g. resilience of social systems and ecosystems; approaches in AFOLU, progress on implementation of REDD+, CDM, and NAMAS); capacity building for Rapid Carbon Stock Appraisals (RaCSA) on the continent, as well as some observations on shifts in land use in the context of production of food-fuel-fibre nexus on the continent.

4. Wood processing and marketing and trade in forest products and services. This is a fairly neglected area in African forestry. Panelists will discuss some key issues in the African wood processing sector. Topics will include public-private partnerships in wood processing and trade; key highlights on marketing and trade in forest products-legal and illegal trade; certification of forest products.

5. The policy arena: linking the forestry sector to the policy environment. The discussions will revolve around : the catalytic role of AFF to African delegates to international negotiations; capacity building for African delegates to international negotiations; experiences and lessons from international negotiations related to forestry; monitoring and reporting on compliance to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related to forests in Africa; views on forestry in sub-regional economic integration as well as experiences with Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

The media roundtable will provide a platform to engage in discussions on the contribution of forests to national economies and rural livelihoods by making reference to evidence based studies undertaken by AFF and partners. The aim is to strengthen collaboration between various African media and stakeholders with the ultimate aim being to facilitate wider knowledge exchange and sharing of experiences that could better profile the forest sector. The event will also enhance visibility of participating countries and other stakeholders wishing to accentuate their commitment to SFM and forestry related climate change issues in Africa.

Where and when?

The knowledge exchange media roundtable will be held as two side events to the 5 day regional workshop Hotel at the Novela Star, Lomé, Togo. Journalists are invited to attend and cover the roundtable discussions on:

Date: Tuesday 27 and Thursday 29 September 2016

Time: 16:00-17:30

Duration: 1.5 hours

Languages: English and French

Welcome remarks: Prof. Godwin Kowero, Executive Secretary African Forest Forum (AFF)

Moderator: Alex Chamwada, International Journalist/ Special Correspondent - KTN Kenya

How can I participate? Participation is by registration only

Interviews and press releases: Journalists interested in interviewing panelists and other delegates to the workshop are advised to contact the Press Officer for the regional workshop @ d.gitonga@cgiar.org

Note to editors

The knowledge exchange media roundtable along with the regional workshop on *“Sharing of knowledge and experiences to strengthen collaboration among stakeholders in African forestry”* are organized by, the African Forest Forum, with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is a pan-African non-governmental organization with its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. It is an association of individuals who share the quest for and commitment to the sustainable management, use and conservation of the forest and tree resources of Africa for the socio-economic wellbeing of its people and for the stability and improvement of its environment. The purpose of AFF is to provide a platform and create an enabling environment for independent and objective analysis, advocacy and advice on relevant policy and technical issues pertaining to achieving sustainable management, use and conservation of Africa’s forest and tree resources as part of efforts to reduce poverty, promote gender equality, and economic and social development.

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BACKGROUND

As more stakeholders take steps towards developing and implementing forestry compatible development (FCD), the demand for information and knowledge on forestry, and more specifically on forest management, is growing rapidly. Information and knowledge on forestry are needed for: influencing policy-making at continental, regional and national levels; making investment decisions; monitoring impact of a diversity of changes and interventions; capacity building; and day-to-day forest management decisions.

In this regard AFF has recently generated considerable information on various aspects of forestry and forest management including climate change, green economy, provision of quality tree germplasm, forest and tree pests and diseases, forest governance, and forest certification. These themes comprise a set of priority issues that if effectively articulated have the potential to enhance the contribution of forests to national economies and rural livelihoods. In response to stakeholders' demands up to date knowledge on these themes has been generated to address knowledge gaps that have constrained the development of the African forest sector.

Managing forests in relation to climate change

The role of forests and trees outside the forest on enhancing resilience and adaptation to climate change is increasingly gaining global attention. Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) has been recognized as a global mitigation mechanism that has a significant potential to contribute to adaptation by improving local livelihoods, enhancing biodiversity, conservation of ecosystem services and strengthening local institutions. Such adaptation benefits are argued to be realized if local forest people gain access to land and forest resources to enable them derive primary and secondary forest products and services.

However, this requires a good enabling environment such as responsive and effective institutions and governance as well as integration of policies for adaptation and mitigation in forests at local, national, regional and international levels. AFF is contributing in improving resilience in forestry and people who depend on forests through generation of knowledge through in-depth studies on implementation and progress made on REDD+, CDM, AFOLU, INDC and voluntary carbon market-oriented activities covering various forest types (rain forest, mountains, mangroves, woodland and savannah, and parklands of the Sahel).

The studies are generating knowledge that would improve African stakeholders' understanding of vulnerability to climate change and application of promising adaptation measures pertinent to AFOLU. The generated information could in turn support development and/or strengthening sound adaptation and mitigation policies and measures associated with improving resilience of social systems and ecosystems. Other studies of the same nature include (i) strengthening adaptation policies and AFOLU based climate change mitigation interventions relevant to forestry and people in African countries for selected Anglophone and francophone countries, covering various forest types (rain forest, mountains, mangroves, woodland and savannah, and parklands of the Sahel and (ii) studies for regional groupings on policies and other issues on the 3Fs (food, fuel and fibre) in the context of climate change in Africa.

Green economy

There are strong indications that the forest sector remains crucial to the attainment of the objectives of green economy and should form part of green economy pathways in Africa through an inclusive and equitable and co-benefit green economy growth in the region in line with the “Future We Want”. Forests can through sustainable forest management enhance the contribution of forests to wealth creation. Forests contribute to the GDP of African countries, are a source of employment, provide for livelihoods for rural populations and forest products comprise export commodities. Analyses on existing forest policy, legal and institutional frameworks in Africa revealed the strengths and opportunities that can be further harnessed to promote forest compatible development. In particular, approaches that enhance investment in improved forest management and certification, afforestation, agroforestry and forest protection will be instrumental in development of green economy strategies, programmes, policies, and legislation that will therefore result in enhanced economic benefits from forests to stakeholders at all levels.

Provision of quality tree germplasm

Presently, there is considerable drive in many African countries for reforestation and rehabilitation initiatives that use trees. There is also considerable tree planting in urban areas. Analyses on the adequacy of current practice on tree germplasm improvement and supply has identified gaps experienced in the provision of quality germplasm that constrain optimal forestry production at both plantation and farm forestry level. The gaps include: a decline in investments by governments in forestry research, especially on tree seed research; loss of capacity and skills in tree improvement and germplasm production; shortage of seeds for key plantation species; poor quality seeds attributed to lack of standards, and uncoordinated seed enterprise in some countries. In efforts to increase productivity of forests there are increasing demands by farmers for mechanisms to ensure more reliable sources of high quality tree seeds. Best practices that hold potential to facilitate provision of quality germplasm for agroforestry systems and improved forest establishment and productivity in Africa have also been explored and proposed for consideration by key stakeholders.

Forests pests and diseases

The need for appropriate measures for effective management of forests and tree pests and diseases that affect the success of forest plantations, productivity and quality of forest products including timber, pulpwood, cannot be overemphasised. The occurrence of pests and diseases in Africa is having considerable impact on forests and tree products including adverse effects on tree growth and yield of forest products thus reducing profits from forests. Effective management of pests and diseases requires reliable information on the biology, ecology, and distribution as well as their impacts on the forest ecosystems and possible methods of control. Such information is crucial for the development of protocols on surveillance of forests and tree pests and diseases in Africa to assist countries in monitoring possible pests and disease epidemics within and across borders. Proposed protocols could form an integral part of sustainable forest management to ensure that forestry yields tangible benefits for small holder farmers and the private sector.

Forest certification

Forest certification is an established soft policy tool intended to incentivize marketing and utilisation of products from sustainably managed forests. It essentially introduces policy changes through commercial rather than central or local power, and uses market acceptance rather than regulatory compliance as an enforcement mechanism. Since the 1990s, forest certification has evolved as a promising market-based tool for promoting responsible forest management by providing market incentives to producers of timber and non-timber products from well-managed forests. As such it is one of the possible approaches

to improve forest governance. In this regard, forest certification therefore holds considerable potential to address issues related to deforestation, illegal logging and trade in forest products, and tax evasion in the forest sector that continue to persist in most of Africa.

Africa is yet to benefit appreciably from forest certification due to limited understanding of the forest certification concept, principles, tools and its processes by many stakeholders in forestry. At best forest certification efforts on the continent can be characterized as scattered and uncoordinated. Out of all the forests certified globally Africa accounts for about 4% and only in ten countries. A number of factors constrain the successful implementation of forest certification in Africa, and they include inadequate or lack of enabling conditions such as good policy and legislation environments, as well as numerous capacity gaps. Capacity gaps include human, financial and physical resources, and technical capabilities and skills, among others. Sensitisation and capacity building on forest certification are key to supporting efforts for responsible forest development and management, value addition as well as marketing and trade in wood and non-wood products. Such efforts will profile and enhance the commercial potential of African forests.