



WFC2015
XIV World Forestry Congress

Forests and People: Investing in a Sustainable Future

7-11 SEPTEMBER 2015 Durban | South Africa

Press Release

Pre-XIV World Forestry Congress workshop to enhance international agenda on the link between African forests, people and environment

Nairobi. 18 August 2015. More than 100 stakeholders in African forestry will gather in Durban, South Africa from 4 to 5 September 2015, for a two day workshop to examine important trends and issues in African forestry that could influence the roles of forests and trees in national economic development, support to livelihoods and environmental stability, among other forest values; in the lead up to the XIV World Forestry Congress.

The workshop is organized by the African Forest Forum in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa, the Centre for Sustainable Development-University of Ibadan, and the Forest Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa, with financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. It will be held at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre.

The workshop will bring together a wide range of stakeholders from Africa and beyond under the theme: *Forests, people and environment: Some perspectives from Africa.*

Participants will include representatives of national governments, civil society, academia, private sector, women and youth groups. They will deliberate and share experiences based on four thematic areas linked to the broader XIV World Forestry Congress theme on *"Forests and people: investing in a sustainable future"*. The workshop has been structured under the sub-themes: rehabilitation of degraded lands using trees; managing forests in the context of climate change; forest governance, marketing and trade in forest products; and socio-economic issues in forestry.

Note to Editors

The World Forestry Congress will take place in Africa for the first time in its history when the Republic of South Africa hosts its XIVth session, under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The XIV WFC will be held from 7 to 11 September 2015 in Durban, following the XIII WFC held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2009. The largest and most inclusive gathering of the global forest community, the Congress takes place every six years. It brings together the world's foresters and forest supporters to review key issues, share expertise and experience, and project a new vision for the future. The theme of this year's event is *"Forests and People: Investing in a Sustainable Future"*. Official Congress sessions will be in English, French and Spanish.

□



African Forest Forum



Forest Research Network of Sub-Saharan Africa



The Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa



Centre for Sustainable Development, University of Ibadan



African Union



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC



Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

Background

There are several trends within and outside the African forestry sector that are gradually defining the future development of forestry in Africa. Within the forest sector some of the notable trends include:

Continued deforestation and forest degradation

Nearly all issues in the forestry debate of today revolve, directly or indirectly, around deforestation and forest degradation. It is through these two processes that the ecosystem capacity of African forests continues to be eroded.

Sustainable forest management (SFM), complemented by tree planting and agroforestry, is the best approach for addressing deforestation and forest degradation while meeting growing human needs for forest products and services. How Africa implements policies that entrench SFM will determine the future availability of forest products and services and their continued role in supporting practically all forms of life on land in the continent.

Although current data shows a decrease in net forest loss in Africa, deforestation¹ still remains a key challenge in Africa, which accounts for over 50% of net recent global deforestation². Forest degradation is also of major concern.

Studies have shown that small holder agriculture expansion, inappropriate fuelwood collection and charcoal production and to a lesser extent, uncontrolled livestock grazing in forests, are the most important drivers of forest degradation in large parts of Africa³. Studies show that in terms of forest degradation, inappropriate firewood collection and charcoal production account for the largest share (45%) in Africa, followed by timber harvesting or logging (32%), while uncontrolled livestock grazing and uncontrolled fires play a minor role of less than ten percent³.

However, fuelwood will continue to be the major energy source for the majority of the people in Africa for a long time; its provision should be well organized, formalized and sustainably managed. Activities related to the sustainable provision of firewood and charcoal hold great potential for increasing employment and income to the sector and national governments.

Managing forests in relation to climate change

The last two decades has seen considerable attention paid to issues of climate change with respect to forests and trees and the people who depend on them. Many countries now include mitigation and adaptation practices in their forest policies, plans and activities. There has been noticeable awareness and growth of various initiatives like Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) in many African countries⁴, however less so on Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) initiatives in forestry. The challenge for forest management is therefore how to add and operationalize the objective on carbon sequestration (i.e. introduce a climate change component) in forest management plans, while not constraining the supply of other equally important forest products and services from all forest types.

Increased participation of the private sector and civil society in forest management

The increasing involvement of rural communities, as small holder farmers, in forestry issues, as well as the private sector and civil society could significantly influence how forests are managed in future.

¹ FAO (2015). FAO Forest Resources Assessment 2015. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/ap862e/ap862e00.pdf>

² FAO (2010). Global Forest Assessment Report 2010 - Main Report. *FAO Forestry Paper No. 163*. Rome, Italy, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

³ Hosonuma, N., Herold, M., Sy, V. D., Fries, R. S. D., Brockhaus, M., Verchot, L., Angelsen, A. & Romijn, E. (2012). An assessment of deforestation and forest degradation drivers in developing countries. *Environmental Research Letters*, 7, 044009

⁴ Nhantumbo, I. and Camargo, M. (2015). REDD+ for profit or for good? Review of private sector and NGO experience in REDD+ projects. *Natural Resource Issues*, No. 30. IIED, London.

Big private investments in commercial forestry enterprises are being promoted through public-private partnerships while civil society organisations are largely responsible for facilitating small holder farmers in growing trees, managing natural forests under their charge, as well as supporting them in taking up new initiatives like REDD+. Civil society organisations also facilitate many activities related to marketing and trade of timber and non-timber products. The involvement of local communities in forestry comes with several challenges; including how to strengthen individual farmers as groups or associations so that their voices can be heard, especially in soliciting credit for investment, product value addition, marketing of the produce, and lobbying for favourable policies. Further, the situation becomes even more complicated when consideration is given to quality supply of germplasm for tree planting to dispersed farmers, putting in place economically feasible harvesting and processing mechanisms for wood from individual farms where trees are interspersed with agricultural crops, livestock enclosures and human dwellings.

Promotion of a holistic management approach of African forests

Following the Rio+20 Summit in June 2012, the global community is increasingly turning its attention and focus towards a "green growth" economic pathway. Added to this is also the concept of 'blue economy' that also applies to the forestry sector. To mainstream both of them in the forestry sector requires a holistic management approach in the way African forests are viewed and managed, so that their utilization and conservation can be done in ways that maintain and/or enhance the forest ecosystem services that are necessary to support the combined blue and green economic growth by generating co-benefits from the conservation of biodiversity, while simultaneously securing forest based livelihoods of local communities. Added to this is the need to take into account, in forest management, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the new international arrangement on forests (IAF). In essence initiatives like green and blue economy, landscape approaches, IAF, and the SDGs will expand the scope for planning forestry activities both in terms of actors in the sector and their increasing demands.

Increased focus on the large youthful African population and increased attention to gender

Africa has a young population (about 65% of the total

population is under 35 years of age) and a fairly rapidly expanding middle class (more than 34% of the continent's population in 2011) that contributes to the growing demand for forest products and services. Many young people in rural areas are unemployed but have the potential to be engaged in agricultural farming and forestry given the right support and policy environment⁵. Equally important are enabling policies that target women because women are not only the custodians of forest and tree resources in much of rural Africa, but because they often bear the highest burden in terms of long hours spent collecting wood fuel, and suffer from diseases arising from indoor pollution due to high usage of wood fuel in inefficient stoves for domestic energy.

Technological factors

Improvements in technologies can increase efficiency in the extraction of wood and non-wood products through advanced techniques for harvesting, transportation and wood processing. Technologies such as remote sensing and ICTs can also usefully support forest conservation through improved monitoring and cost-effective data collection. Telephone banking, through systems like M-Pesa in East Africa, also facilitates investments in many areas where bank facilities are scarce. In many cases small farmers' activities require small sums of money that can quickly be handled this way. Cellphones are also facilitating exchange of marketing and trade information among rural communities in several countries. Farm forestry could gain considerable momentum through the support of these new technologies.

Rehabilitation of degraded lands using trees

There is increasing emphasis on using forest management practices and technologies that have the potential to promote rehabilitation and/or restoration of degraded forests and woodlands. Some of the methods used to encourage natural regeneration in forest restoration programmes in dry forests and woodlands of southern Africa include complete coppice; coppice with standards and selective cutting; followed by pollarding, pruning and lopping. Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) is also common in some countries, for example in southern Niger where very significant gains have been reported. Enclosures to protect

⁵ Brooks, K., Zorya, S. and Gautam, A. (2013). Employment in Agriculture: Jobs for Africa's Youth. *2012 Global Food Policy Report*. Washington, DC, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

emerging seedlings are prevalent in livestock farming areas where they are used to encourage the rehabilitation of degraded grazing lands, for example in the Tigray in Ethiopia. Artificial regeneration in woodlots or farm forests is often prioritized for out-growers in Uganda, for energy production in Rwanda and reforestation of bare hills in Ethiopia⁶. Agroforestry is also recognized as an important avenue for rehabilitation of degraded areas, especially to improve soil fertility and soil conservation, and to enhance ecosystems services such as carbon sequestration.

Increasing intra-African trade in forest products

Available records on intra-African trade in forest products indicate that the volumes traded have been very small. However, there are potentially big unrecorded, and possibly very significant, illegal sales of forest products across national borders^{7,8,9}. While it is right to condemn illegalities in such trade, it is also important to understand how this profitable trade is evolving, its contribution to socio-economic development, and how it could be formalized and well organised so that it contributes to broader policies of economic integration in Africa, where trade is key.

Forest certification provides evidence on the sustainable sourcing of forest-based raw materials in products. It provides a credible link between responsible production and consumption of forest products, enabling consumers and businesses to make purchasing decisions that benefit people and the environment as well as providing ongoing business value. It is important to evaluate how forest certification can be widely employed as a way of promoting responsible behavior in African forestry.

⁶ Chirwa, P.W.; Mahamane, L.; Syampungani, I. and Babalola, F.D. (2015). Management and restoration practices in degraded landscapes of Southern Africa and requirements for upscaling. *International Forest Review*, Vol. 16(7). In press.

⁷ Lescuyer, G., Cerutti, O.P., Essiane Mendoula, E., Eba'a A., R., Nasi, R. (2012). Evaluation du secteur du sciage artisanal dans le bassin du Congo. In, C. de Wasseige, P. de Marcken, N. Bayol, F. Hiol Hiol, Ph. Mayaux, B. Desclée, A. Nasi, A. Billand, P. Defourny, R. Eba'a Atyi (eds.), *Les forêts du bassin du Congo : Etats des forêts 2010*. Office des publications de l'Union Européenne: Luxembourg, pp.97- 107.

For further information please contact;

Executive Secretary
African Forest Forum (AFF)
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri,
P.O. Box 30677 – 00100, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel.: +254 20 722 4203
Fax: + 254 20 722 4001/ 4181

Email: exec.sec@afforum.org; g.kowero@cgiar.org,
Website: www.afforum.org

Follow us on Twitter @africanff
Like us on Facebook / African Forest Forum
Find us on LinkedIn / African Forest Forum (AFF)

