



AFF Newsletter  
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## Message from the Executive Secretary

I am pleased to share with you our AFF e-newsletter. Since our last newsletter, there have been several new and exciting stories to share with the African forestry community.

The adoption of the first-ever UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF) and related four-year work programme by the UN General Assembly on 27 April 2017 was a historic move to provide a global framework for action at all levels to sustainably manage all types of forests and trees outside forests and contain deforestation and degradation. The signing of the Paris Climate Agreement by 195 countries raised the profile of forests in ways unparalleled. The 2030 Agenda, complemented by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, contains a goal and various targets on forests to guide investments and a review process that will allow all partners to assess the impact of their actions.

All these agendas have established a good framework for international cooperation and action on forests at all levels that is crucial for enhancing sustainable forest management (SFM) practices. While collaborative partnerships are the way forward for lasting progress on SFM, information exchange on the strengths of and lessons learned by countries on the continent can accelerate replication of results and practices to benefit more people and also secure the protection of our environment.

AFF has accumulated a reasonable body of knowledge and experience in forestry and related issues. In the last few months AFF has facilitated knowledge exchange and collaboration among countries on various aspects related to forests and trees on the continent. At the regional level, we have partnered with various institutions and forestry experts to share findings from studies on priority issues affecting the forestry sector. These are related to climate change in forestry, forestry in green economy, provision of quality tree germplasm on the continent, state of forest pests and diseases in Africa, state of forest certification in Africa, and public private partnerships in the sector. For the most part, these exchanges have been peer-to-peer, practical and cost-effective.

Beyond the African region, AFF has collaborated with other stakeholders, and more specifically in providing back up to African delegates in the process that culminated in development and adoption of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF) and related four-year work programme. It is very gratifying that Africa participated very actively in this process and owns the outputs of the process. AFF continues to strengthen the capacity of individuals and institutions and is currently supporting 22 postgraduate students who are undertaking their research work within the framework of the work implemented by the institution, in addition to another four students on a masters' degree programme implemented jointly between AFF and Bern University of Applied Sciences in Switzerland.

AFF successfully organized the Second Meeting of the Members Forum that was held electronically from 27 February-3 March 2017. I wish to congratulate the newly elected Chair, Prof. Demel Teketay and Vice Chair, Mr. Ibro Adamou of the Members' Forum to office for the next five years. I also take this opportunity to thank Prof. Fredrick Owino and Dr. Abdelazim Mirghan Ibrahim, now our Past Chair and Vice Chair respectively. We are indebted to them for their contributions to the growth of the Members' Forum.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter.

Prof. Godwin Kowero  
Executive Secretary, AFF

## Knowledge sharing on sustainable forest management in Africa

As the post-2015 agenda evolves, rapid urbanization along with low industrialization are stepping up the global demand for and consumption of forest products and services in Africa. Deforestation and forest degradation persist in many regions while many other pressing concerns like illegal logging and trade in forest products, wild fires, diseases and pests, invasive alien species, which do not respect national boundaries can more effectively be tackled through regional cooperation facilitated by knowledge sharing mechanisms.



**Kakum National Park**, located in the coastal environs of the Central Region of Ghana. It is one of only 2 locations in Africa with a canopy walkway, which is 350 metres (1,150 ft) long and connects seven tree tops which provides access to the area covered by a tropical rainforest. Photo by Chiappi Nicola via [Creative Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kakum.jpg) on Wikipedia: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kakum.jpg>

Knowledge sharing is turning out to be ever more essential to ensure that sustainable forest management (SFM) interventions are based on sound scientific evidence. In order for this to happen, the gaps in knowledge must be bridged. In this regard knowledge sharing becomes an important avenue that can increase access to relevant and timely information for decision making by the people who depend on these resources and actors in forestry business.

The concept of knowledge sharing has moved, away from the traditional idea of one party imparting knowledge to another, towards co-production of knowledge and mutual learning as a transformative process resulting in innovation for all the parties involved (OECD, 2011).<sup>1</sup> Today, many African countries and AFF recognize the innovative potential of co-production of knowledge to improve the health and productivity of the forests.

As a contribution to this effort, AFF along with its partners, has leveraged on the distinct expertise and comparative advantage of its character to facilitate the promotion of technical and scientific exchanges related to the sustainable management of African natural forest ecosystems. Through permanent and ad hoc task groups, think tanks and committees, AFF draws together experts to research and provide scientific information on the many areas of African forestry that require strengthening.

In the past two years, regular surveys on recipients of information that AFF shares through various avenues have clearly demonstrated that they have been benefiting from the knowledge products. In this period AFF's work addressed issues related to forest certification, quality supply and management of tree germplasm, managing forest and tree pests and diseases, and public-private-partnerships in primary and secondary forestry production that collectively generated very useful information that continues to be shared.

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<sup>1</sup> OECD (2011), "Policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and engaging in mutual learning, OECD Publishing, Paris.

## FACILITATING EXCHANGE AND LEARNING

To help African countries learn more about SFM, the African Forest Forum (AFF), in collaboration with the University of Lomé, facilitated a regional workshop on *“Sharing of knowledge and experiences to strengthen collaboration among stakeholders in African forestry”* from 26 to 30 September 2016 in Lomé Togo.

The regional workshop provided participants with a platform to share knowledge, exchange lessons learnt and good practices, and make available policy instruments and tools developed through studies undertaken by AFF and partners.



Participants of a regional workshop on *“Sharing of knowledge and experiences to strengthen collaboration among stakeholders in African forestry”* held from 26 to 30 September 2016 in Lomé Togo.

The workshop used a participatory approach, which allowed the exchange of information and experiences among the 71 participants and media practitioners that attended the event. A blend of short technical presentations, group work, discussions, open forum and excursions were employed to create a positive learning environment. Knowledge exchange media roundtables were held as two side events to the 5 day workshop. Journalists were invited to attend and cover the roundtable discussions that were led by a panel of international experts and moderators.

The roundtable discussions provided direct interactions 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. Areas of study that were effectively articulated included: climate change in forestry, forestry in green economy, provision of quality tree germplasm, management of forest pests and diseases, good forest governance, forest certification and public private partnerships (PPP) investments in the sector.

The second regional workshop on *“Sharing of knowledge and experiences on SFM and climate change in African forestry”* was held from 22 to 26 May 2017 in Entebbe, Uganda. This workshop was organized by AFF and Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. By organising a series of these peer learning events (including site visits), AFF aims to enhance mutual learning among participants and provide a platform for a more open exchange of ideas. The knowledge sharing workshops and media events are made possible with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) on two projects, namely: *“African Forests, People and Climate Change”*; and *“Strengthening Sustainable Forest Management in Africa”*, respectively.

## Second meeting of the AFF Members' Forum

The Second Meeting of the Members Forum of the African Forest Forum was held electronically from February 27 – March 03, 2017. The AFF Constitution requires that such meetings are held once every five years. The meeting provided an important opportunity for AFF members to take note of the Institution's achievements and provided them with the opportunity to contribute to the future direction of AFF; and all this was done through an asynchronous online discussion platform. A total of 371 members participated in the five day Members' Forum and effectively contributed to the agenda.



*View of the asynchronous online discussion platform developed within the AFF intranet to facilitate discussions of the Members Forum. The platform replaces the face-to-face interaction of a traditional meeting given scope and large number of AFF members to date.*

Issues such as key decisions made by the AFF Governing Council were discussed and endorsed; key achievements made by AFF were highlighted; election of next Chair and Vice Chair of the Members' Forum and other issues were effectively addressed.

The members applauded the achievements made on implementation of the two projects, namely: *Strengthening sustainable forest management in Africa* funded by Sida and *African forests, people and climate change* funded by SDC. They noted that AFF's knowledge products had the potential to strengthen the capacity of forestry stakeholders and partners undertaking SFM practices in Africa. Members noted further that there was need synthesize lessons learned and facilitate development of more programmes at national and regional level.

Members underlined the necessity to involve young forestry professionals and students in AFF activities. This was viewed as a means to help inspire change and influence the course of forest resource management on the continent. These, along with other recommendations and observations, were forwarded to the AFF Governing Council Meeting that was held from 27-31 March, 2017 in Nairobi Kenya.

The first meeting of the Members' Forum was held electronically on 15-20 February 2012. It was during this meeting that members elected the previous Chair (Prof. Fredrick Owino of the Republic of Kenya) and Vice Chair (Dr. Abdelazim Mirghan Ibrahim of the Republic of Sudan) of Members' Forum; ratified the AFF Constitution, guidelines for administrative and financial operations and ratified several Governing Council decisions.

## Strengthening negotiation skills for forest related multilateral processes

A short training course on negotiation skills for forest related multilateral processes for African delegates to the Twelfth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF12) was held from 18 to 21 April 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya.



*Participants of the preparatory meeting for the twelfth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF12) and short course on negotiation skills held from 18 to 21 April 2017. Photo © AFF 2017*

Studies by AFF reveal that while many African governments have signed, ratified or acceded to forest related international agreements, Africa's forestry related contribution in the formulation and implementation of some of the forestry related international processes has not been very effective; with the exception of the sessions of the United Nations Forum of Forests. There is still need for proper understanding of the issues under discussion and as well as reaching consensus on them at national and regional levels prior to embarking on the international debates that guide the formulation of the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

As a result there is limited awareness, appreciation and appropriation within African governments and other stakeholders on existence and importance of these discourses and the MEAs. This leads to poor ownership of the outcomes from such debates/negotiations and low implementation of the decisions from processes associated with these agreements. Consequently, African nations are yet to fulfil most of their international obligations on forestry and have not realised the benefits thereof.

In this context the aim of the training course was to strengthen the capacity of African delegates to effectively engage in intergovernmental dialogues through a well-informed basis and to effectively articulate Africa's contribution, in addition to understanding how to mainstream decisions from forest related international agreements into national processes; and consequently effectively contributing to achievement of global goals.

Delivering an opening statement on behalf Prof. Judi Wakhungu, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, the Kenya Forest Service Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Emilio Mugo encouraged participants to ensure that the African voice was well articulated and clear. He further encouraged the delegates to showcase best practices by African countries that were working

towards improving governance of forest resources. He then extended an invitation to African delegates to tour the Karura forest that serves as a model of a peri-urban forest jointly managed by the local community and the Government of Kenya. He thanked AFF for organizing the preparatory meeting.

Representing the African Union Commission, Mr. Almami Dampha, stated that the UNFF was one of the global initiatives intended to promote sustainable forest management (SFM) and provided a means for African countries to effectively articulate the challenges and opportunities encountered during its uptake. He affirmed the role of AFF in providing knowledge brokerage services for stakeholders who wanted to influence policy. In this regard, he thanked AFF for playing a lead role in building the capacity of a critical mass of African negotiators to such international discourses.

Mr. Macarthy Oyebo, Chair of AFF Governing Council informed participants that the UNFF12 was unique in nature as deliberations would take place in five days. He further stated that representatives of Member States and observers would discuss the implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030, which was adopted on 20 January 2017 together with the UNFF's first Quadrennial Programme of Work of the Forum for 2017-2020. Towards this end, a consensus would be required among African delegates along with an African position on the agenda items for the international forest policy dialogue.

### **Spotlight on indigenous forests**

Following the theme of the workshop, participants had a one-of-a-kind opportunity to go on an extensive tour of one of the largest urban gazetted forests in the world - the Karura Forest Reserve that's covering approx. 1,041.3 hectares, Karura Forest Reserve is situated in the Northern part of the City of Nairobi. It is rich in biological diversity with many species of plants, birds, insects and mammals to within its boundaries.

The dense population surrounding the forest, including two slums and several more affluent areas, have led to high demands on forest resources. These are demands on fuel wood, water, bee keeping, ecotourism, recreation and grazing pasture, among others.



*Patrick Kariuki, Deputy Director, Forest Extension Services and KFS Forest Rangers leading African delegates on a tour of the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) reserve. Photo © AFF*

Due to its proximity to a growing city, there have been plans to reduce the forest area in favour of housing and other developments. Conservationists, led by Wangari Maathai, the leader of Green Belt Movement, who later became a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, carried out a much publicized campaign for saving the forest.<sup>2</sup>

Patrick Kariuki, Deputy Director, Forest Extension Services and KFS forest rangers led the participants on the excursion. The tour began with a general introduction and history of the forest and a half hour of

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<sup>2</sup> KFS (2010) Karura Forest Strategic Management Plan 2010–2014 (Nairobi: Kenya Forest Service)

presentation on its current attractions. This was followed by a tree planting exercise and visit to the Amani Garden, in the forest, developed in memory of the victims at Westgate Shopping Centre 21st September 2013.

Participants then had the chance to delve deep into the Karura Forest Reserve while viewing serene groves of secondary and primary indigenous trees, by hitting the nature trail. Participants were informed that an electric fence was built around the forest for security reasons. In addition, despite the fact that 70% of Karura's visitors were Kenyan citizens, there was a growing appreciation by being listed as No. 4 out of 101 Things To Do in Nairobi.

Special attention was drawn to an old chimney incinerator that was used in the past by Central Bank of Kenya for destroying decommissioned currency notes. A 15-metre waterfall, archaeological sites and caves considered to be sacred by many as they were used by Mau-Mau freedom fighters as hideouts during the struggle for Kenya's independence were also key highlights. Participants were also made aware of the Forest Products Research Centre situated in the forest and adjacent to the Kenya Forest Service headquarters.



*African delegates during a briefing session and participating in a tree planting exercise at the Kenya Forest Reserve. Photo © AFF*



*A view of the Amani Garden, Karura Forest. Photo © AFF*



*African delegates with KFS Forest Rangers. Photo © AFF*



Participants on an exploratory nature trail and site visit to the 'sacred' caves of the, Karura Forest. Photos © AFF



Waterfall in Karura Forest, Nairobi, Kenya. Photo: Ninaras via Creative Commons License, Wikipedia

## A milestone for forests in New York

*The year 2017 will be remembered for two very remarkable and inspiring advances in the post-2015 global forestry agenda: on 20 January during the UN Forum on Forests, 197 Member States reached agreement on the first UN Strategic Plan for Forests that provides an ambitious vision for global forests in 2030 and in May, action was kick-started on its implementation.*

The United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF) is a powerful breakthrough for international forestry. The UNSPF delivers a universal framework for “actions at all levels to sustainably manage all types of forests and trees outside forests and halt deforestation and forest degradation”. Such a framework – with the idea that forests are important to people and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development– redefine the direction of AFF’s work. It is guided by six Global Forest Goals, which are voluntary and universal.



L-R: Godwin Kowero, African Forest Forum (AFF); Gerhard Dieterle, Executive Director, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); Uma Lele, Independent Scholar, Keynote Speaker; Wu Zhimin, UNFF Bureau member; Moncef Khane, UNFF12 Secretary; Chip Barber, World Resources Institute (WRI), Moderator; and Frances Seymour, Center for Global Development. Photo by IISD/ENB | Francis Dejon.  
[http://enb.iisd.org/forestry/unff/unff12/images/2may/2dais\\_FOR\\_8273.jpg](http://enb.iisd.org/forestry/unff/unff12/images/2may/2dais_FOR_8273.jpg)

### SIX GLOBAL FOREST GOALS<sup>3</sup>

The forest-related goals proposed by the UN Forum on Forests and adopted by the General Assembly are:

- **Global Forest Goal 1** – Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change.
- **Global Forest Goal 2** – Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people.
- **Global Forest Goal 3** – Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests.
- **Global Forest Goal 4** – Mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management and strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships.
- **Global Forest Goal 5** – Promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the UN Forest Instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda.
- **Global Forest Goal 6** – Enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the UN System and across Collaborative Partnership on Forests member organizations, as well as across sectors and relevant stakeholders.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF) refer to:  
[http://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/UNSPF\\_AdvUnedited.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/UNSPF_AdvUnedited.pdf)

The Chair of the twelfth session of the Forum on Forests (UNFF12)<sup>4</sup> Peter Besseau in his opening remarks informed delegates that the UNSPF took into account the ambitions of the International Arrangement on Forests and formed an action plan to steer the Forum’s efforts in the years to come.

Delegates of UNFF12 appreciated the fact that transformation in the forestry sector would require ‘decisive, collective action, within and beyond the UN System’. Public private partnerships were cited as being key in resource mobilization to aid implementation of the UNSPF and subsequent adoption of sustainable forest management practices. Such cooperation would be essential to attain the global target of “expanding the world’s forests by 120 million hectares by 2030”.

The five day forum provided a platform for delegates to engage in discussions and share experiences on “thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2017”. Panel discussions focused on the contribution of forests to:

- SDG 1 (Poverty alleviation);
- SDG 2 (Food security) and
- SDG 5 (Gender equality).

AFF played a role in the deliberations by highlighting how a healthy, functioning forestry sector is central to sustainable development. Prof. Godwin Kowero, Executive Secretary, African Forest Forum (AFF), made reference to work that shows the enormous contributions forests make to national economies while highlighting the sector’s potential role in poverty alleviation. He noted that a vibrant forest sector makes way for local economic development, and emphasized the link between improved governance, land-based activities and poverty eradication.

Similarly, Cecile Ndjebet, President, African Women’s Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF) made delegates aware of the vital role women play in the forestry sector. She urged stakeholders to involve women in decision-making, provide capacity building for men and promote equitable access to resources.

## Voices from AFF members



*“AFF generates a lot of information on forestry in Africa. We can exploit this capacity by placing ourselves as “Forest Observatory for Africa”....AFF/FOA. This will require limited added capacity but ....can be done! Alternatively, among our partners, we should include forest resources observatories and forest watershed observatories in the different sub-regions of the continent. An example in the Congo Basin is the, “Observatoire Satellital des Forêts d’Afrique Centrale (OSFAC), which generates highly specialized intelligence on forests in its area of coverage. There are others on forest watersheds in West Africa”.*

-Martin Nganje, Cameroon

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on the twelfth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF12) held from 1-5 May 2017 in New York, visit: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/current-session/index.html>



**Moses Fayiah, Lecturer, Njala University Sierra Leone.**

Mr. Moses Fayiah is a lecturer, Department of Forestry, Njala University in Sierra Leone. He attended AFF training workshop on multilateral environmental engagements organized by AFF in Mombasa, Kenya in December, 2015. After the training, he wrote a report to the Head, Department of Forestry, in his University. As a result, the Head of Department in consultation with the Dean of School of Natural Resources Management and the University Senate approved that MEAs be incorporated as a topic into forestry training programs at Njala University.

## AFF in the media

Efforts to increase the reach of AFF with its information have targeted the expansion of the communications partnership sphere of influence by engaging with media, relevant associations, and emerging key regional bodies such as the Pan African Media Alliance for Climate Change.

17 articles (15 English, 2 French) have been collected with media coverage spread across the East, West, South and Central Africa, as well as with the wider international community.

Some of the media engagements have featured on Channel Africa (South Africa) – the international radio service of the SABC – that hosts various interviews with experts on interesting and important issues affecting Africa and the globe.

Others include: KTN and Standard Digital News (East Africa); Eco Nigeria, TVC News, Radio Lomé, *Environment Infos* and InfoCongo (West Africa); Standard Tribune (Central Africa), and the Pan African Media Alliance for Climate Change (PAMACC), an international news wire.



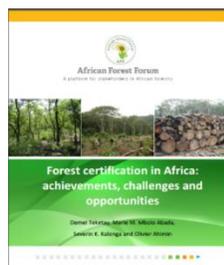
*Alex Chamwada, a media consultant, is a Kenyan journalist with international repute. He is currently a special correspondent (freelancer) for Kenya Television Network, KTN. He is the producer and host of 'The Chamwada Report', a current affairs show that airs every Sunday at 8.30pm on KTN News Channel.*

*Watch: The State of African Forests Episode 63 (part one and two). News feature available at:*

<http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/ktnnews/video/watch/2000114441/-the-chamwada-report-the-state-of-african-forests-episode-63-part-one> and

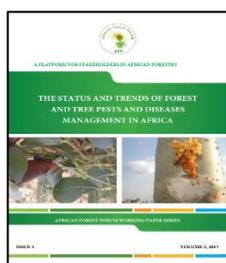
<http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/ktnnews/video/watch/2000114442/-the-chamwada-report-the-state-of-african-forests-episode-63-part-two>

## New publications and tools



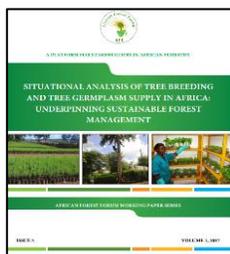
The monograph titled “*Forest certification in Africa: achievements, challenges and opportunities*” by Teketay D., Mbolo A. M. M., Kalonga S. K. and Ahimin O. in 2016 seeks to enhance the understanding of achievements made in forest certification in Africa, in addition to identification of gaps, challenges, constraints encountered and needs for capacity building, including training programme(s) that will be instrumental in the promotion and successful implementation of forest certification on the continent. Available at:

[http://www.afforum.org/sites/default/files/English/English\\_13.pdf](http://www.afforum.org/sites/default/files/English/English_13.pdf)



The AFF Working Paper (3) 3 titled “*The status and trends of forest and tree pests and diseases management in Africa*” is by Gichora, M., Kojwang', H., & Bosu, P. 2017. This synthesis report is based on three recent forest health studies commissioned by the African Forest Forum (AFF) in Eastern, Southern, and West and Central Africa (Bosu, 2016; Gichora, 2016; Kojwang, 2015) as well as literature reviews on the subject of management of forest pests and diseases in the North of the continent. Available at:

[http://afforum.org/sites/default/files/English/English\\_132.pdf](http://afforum.org/sites/default/files/English/English_132.pdf).



The AFF Working Paper (3)1 titled, “*Situational analysis of tree breeding and tree germplasm supply in Africa: underpinning sustainable forest management*” is by Marunda, C. T., Avana-Tientcheu, M. L. & Msanga, H. P. (2017). This report is based on situational analyses of tree breeding and tree germplasm supply conducted in West and Central Africa (Avana-Tientcheu, 2016), Eastern Africa (Msanga, 2016) and Southern Africa (Marunda, 2016). Available at:

[http://afforum.org/sites/default/files/English/English\\_152.pdf](http://afforum.org/sites/default/files/English/English_152.pdf).

## Recent and upcoming events

Dates / Location	Title of event
05-09 June 2017 Freetown, Sierra Leone	Training workshop on rapid forest carbon appraisal and marketing and trade in forest carbon.
12-16 June 2017 Monrovia, Liberia	Training workshop on rapid forest carbon appraisal and marketing and trade in forest carbon.
26-30 June 2017 Lusaka, Zambia	Regional training workshop for African forestry experts on forest related international agreements' between June 26 -30 June 2017.
10-14 July 2017 Accra, Ghana	Sharing of knowledge and experiences on public and private sector development in forestry and response to climate change and transboundary forestry issues

17-21 July 2017 Accra, Ghana	Climate modeling and international dialogues
4-8 September 2017 Lilongwe, Malawi	Climate modeling and international dialogues
4-15 September 2017 Ordos, China	UN Convention to Combat Desertification COP 13
18-22 September 2017 Maputo Mozambique	Capacity building for small and medium scale private sector in forestry in carbon trade in EAC + SADC countries
6-17 November 2017 Bonn, Germany	COP23 on the UNFCCC

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