



THE African Forest Forum

A platform for stakeholders in African Forestry

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AFF signs MoU with the Pan Africa Agency of Great Green Wall of the Sahel and Sahara Initiative (PAGGW)

The African Forest Forum and the Pan Africa Agency of the Great Green Wall of the Sahel and Sahara Initiative (PAGGW) have signed an MoU, with the aim of consolidating, developing and intensifying their cooperation and effectiveness to achieve mutually agreed goals and objectives in the implementation of the Great Green Wall of the Sahel and Sahara Initiative (GGWSSI). The signing ceremony was held at the ICRAF Campus, Nairobi, Kenya on 24 May 2012. The African Forest Forum was represented by Prof Godwin Kowero (the Executive Secretary) and the Pan African Agency for the Great Green Wall by Prof Abdoulaye Dia (the Executive Secretary).

This MoU sets up a framework for partnership in the implementation of the GGWSSI between PAGGW and AFF and, specifically, in forestry development and environmental management in the region covered by this Initiative. In this regard, AFF and PAGGW seek to make contributions that will improve the management and wise use of forest and tree resources



in the Sahel region in ways that effectively support socio-economic development, alleviate poverty, and enhance environmental protection in the region.

More specifically, the two institutions have agreed to cooperate in activities related to the implementation of the GGWSSI through restoration of terrestrial degraded ecosystems in order to increase food security, reduce poverty, as well as build capacity to contain the negative effects of climate change and environmental protection. Areas of cooperation also include the development and dissemination of educational and awareness materials about the place and role of forests in global negotiations on climate; information on adaptation, mitigation, carbon market and trade access; and the challenges and opportunities in climate change. Both institutions will work together in the development and improvement of capacities in all areas that can contribute to the implementation of the Initiative.

AFF in collaboration with ITTO organizes a Forest Policy Day

The first IUFRO-FORNESSA Regional Congress took place from 25–29 June 2012 in Nairobi, Kenya. Organized by IUFRO and FORNESSA, and with support from a number of donor organizations and institutions, the Congress was held on the theme “Forests and Trees: Serving the People of Africa and the World.” It was jointly hosted by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI).

As part of activities of the Regional Congress, AFF in collaboration with ITTO organised a Forest Policy Day on 28 June 2012, on the theme “The Policy/Science Interface for Sustainable Forest Management in Africa.”

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE POLICY DAY

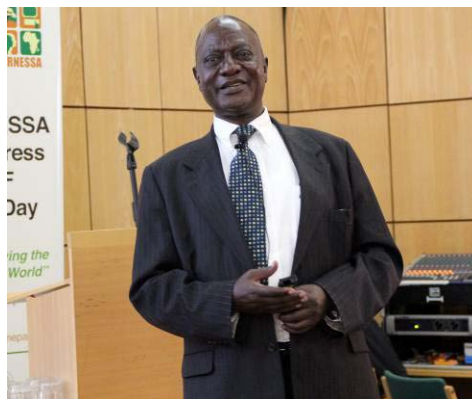
During the opening ceremony of the Policy Day, Dr. Victor Agyeman, Chairman of FORNESSA, commenting on the low number of researchers and scientific publications from the African continent, called for action to turn challenges into strengths, and to build a strong regional platform for knowledge sharing.

Prof. Godwin Kowero, Executive Secretary, AFF, highlighted AFF’s commitment to forging partnerships across science, policy, and practice, and underscored the need to communicate scientific findings to policymakers to foster good forest governance.

The following are highlights from two keynote presentations and other presentations during the Forest Policy Day.



Keynote address: Influence of academic and research institutions on African forestry by Prof. Fred Owino Chair of Members’ Forum of AFF



In general, Africa lags behind other continents in science-driven forestry development. There are many cases of education and research institutions running out-dated programmes, not being development oriented, and remaining poorly resourced. Uptake of new knowledge and skills is also very slow and unpredictable.

Only a few academic institutions have achieved continental and international repute in forestry. Practical education is particularly limited.

Moreover, education and research remain a very low priority in both national budgets and donor support. There is also a problem of skewed funding in favour of specific areas like climate change.

The last 20 years of Rio dialogue on environment and development has significantly influenced the direction of forest science, with increasing attention to the services which forests and trees provide. New players have joined the forest science arena. The necessary body of knowledge for a forestry practitioner has greatly expanded. One of the forest principles adopted by the on-going United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) is that forest management will be based on the best science. This calls for revamped forestry education and research, particularly in African countries. Organisations such as the African Forest Forum need to continue addressing these issues, including through strengthening post-graduate education and research programmes.

Keynote address: What shapes forest management in Africa: the niche for science, Prof. Lidia Brito, Director, Science-Policy Division, UNESCO, Paris

The context for forest management in Africa is changing; with new stakeholders intervening in forest management, competition among land uses intensifying, local decisions having global impact, more frequent crises and uncertainties occurring, as well as knowledge and technology becoming increasingly important. The continued functioning of the earth system is at risk but we know enough to act. New ideas can form and spread quickly, creating the momentum for major transformations required for a truly sustainable planet. The emerging scientific understanding points to planetary boundaries, and that they are profoundly interconnected and interdependent. There is a fair understanding of why existing international governance is not dealing quickly enough with current global challenges.

So, we need new approaches to research and education as well as to the interface between science and decision-makers in policy and business. There is a need for a balance among environmental, social and economic objectives. Development must be people centred, inclusive, ethical, and empowering the powerless. Research should be more integrative, international and solution oriented with focus on quality, policy relevance, and interdisciplinarity. Science needs to strategically choose its niche, build ownership and commitment as well as sustainability, as well as build bridges among development actors, and include society in the networks of excellence.

Generating and communicating science information to support policy and decision-making in forestry, Dr. Robert Nasi, CIFOR-Leader of CGIAR CRP6

The gap between knowledge and practice is a major constraint to sustainable forest management. Policy knowledge is not communicated effectively while policy makers do not generally go about seeking knowledge to assist them in understanding the decisions they make. Passive dissemination of information is generally ineffective. Best practice for dissemination and promoting effective diffusion is well known but seldom implemented by research institutions. The pathway from outputs to outcomes and impact is constrained by the difficulty of quantifying impact, improper project design, passive expectation of outcomes, inappropriate communication outreach, and time lag between outputs and adoption.

There is a need to design projects for change, write for impact, avoid over-commitment, plan M&E properly, force recognition and work with the right partners. Consistently effective outreach efforts include educational outreach visits, social media, and interactive educational meetings. Applied and strategic research institutions must reward success in uptake/adoption and not just in publications count. Further, empirical studies on the relative effectiveness and efficiency of different dissemination and uptake strategies are also required.

Decision-making in the public forestry sector: the case of Cameroon, Denis Koulagna, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Cameroon

This presentation provided a detailed overview of the Cameroonian forest sector in terms of actions undertaken and the main achievements.

The presentation concluded by stating that decision-making in the forest sector in Cameroon is a complex process that needs strong political commitment for it to be effective. Much has been achieved in the last 10 years with the support of various partners as well as by 'learning by doing'. Future challenges anticipated include: Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade; Decentralization: transfer of forest reserves to decentralized councils, management of annual forest royalties; competition between forestry, mining and agro-industries on the same land; and reforestation to stem the effects of climate change.

Introduction to ITTO Project on "generating and disseminating scientific information on REDDES in Africa", Ernest Foli, FORIG, Ghana

As part of efforts to address deforestation and forest degradation as well as improve environmental services from forests in tropical countries, IUFRO and FORNESSA, in collaboration with ITTO, are cooperating to implement a two year project in Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria. The project seeks to build capacity in scientific analysis, dissemination of scientific information and effective interactions among forest managers, local communities, and policy makers at national and regional levels. In this regard the project staff will work with the forest science community in selected pilot sites through an integrative, international, policy-relevant and multi-disciplinary approach. Expert group leaders and pilot sites have already been identified and background information about the sites is being compiled.

“REDDES Pilot Areas in Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria”, Louis Bernard Cheteu, Cameroon

This presentation, which was linked to the previous one, gave an overview of the four REDDES Pilot areas in terms of their ecological and socio-economic situation as well as local trends in climate change, resources degradation, and vulnerability of local communities.

Deforestation in East and Southern African woodlands: A call for policy change, Paxie Chirwa, South Africa

For a long time woodlands have provided for subsistence and commercial needs of rural and urban dwellers. Utilization has resulted in continued decline in woodland cover. Land clearing for agriculture and charcoal production are the main contributors. Most of the policies are top down, they ignore the fundamentals of rural livelihood and seek to protect forests and woodlands against utilisation thus distancing communities in forest management programmes. National policies and plans emphasize participatory forest management, though they are fairly silent on benefit sharing mechanism among communities themselves and between communities, national Governments and other stakeholders.

Policies need to be more integrative, provide for planning that is based on growth, and use of more efficient methods for charcoal production. They must be based on current and reliable data, provide appropriate incentives, and maintain environmental health. In some countries laws are yet to be approved and implemented, and forestry departments/services are yet to be fully independent. There is need to recognise that traditional livelihood systems are a way of life for many forest dependent communities.

Commercial Chainsaw logging, corruption and livelihoods in Central Africa, Paolo Omar Cerutti (CIFOR & ANU)

Over 60% of national sawn wood production in Central Africa is in the informal sector. For operators, the rule of law is questioned, there is high indebtedness, and little investment. For society at large there is high inter and intra institutional conflict. And, generally, there is a loss of confidence in state institutions, and this erodes legitimacy of the state itself. Frequent dialogue and closer proximity between knowledge generators and policy makers can improve the science/policy interface. Wider application of ethical conduct among actors could go a long way in building trust and free flow of information.

Keynote address for panel discussion: The Food-Fibre-Fuel Nexus in Africa, Mafa Chipeta, AFF member

We need fuel; we need fibre; we need food – forests and agriculture can each supply some. Unfortunately, reality shows an unflattering situation on the state of both sectors: Africa cannot feed itself and has among the highest rates of forest loss. We appear reluctant to face our responsibilities (with excuses such as weak capacity and colonialism) and we allow others to decide our development and research agenda. We set our goals too low (survival instead of prosperity) and easily drift to follow development fads, in the process neglecting our pressing problems.

Low farm and forest productivity is a key problem; and this partly explains the continued low investment in these sectors. ‘Land-grab’ investments are not necessarily helping product mix match and productivity. There is a need to intensify agriculture and modernise forest products harvesting and processing so that more food, fuel and fibre can be produced on much less land. All African countries need policy incentives for an organised and sustainable fuel wood sector that must include resource creation.

Africa should stop being more purist than others about use of fossil fuels for power; it should use power/energy sector funds to finance agricultural productivity, afforestation, and biofuels development. African foresters and researchers need to sell an Africa-focused REDD to the power sector, make intra-Africa/intra-country carbon trade work, and integrate the ‘Africa REDD’ under SFM where it belongs.

Book launches, chaired by Joe Cobbinah, chair, Congress Scientific Committee (CSC):

Emmanuel Ze Meka launched a book “*World Atlas of Mangroves*” which was published by Earthscan Ltd and funded by ITTO. He said the book highlights the importance of mangrove ecosystems for conserving biodiversity, combating climate change and abating coastal disasters, and provides information for mangrove conservation.

Godwin Kowero, launching the book “*Climate Change and African Forest and Wildlife Resources*” published by AFF, emphasized the need for advanced scientific knowledge in forestry relating to climate change. The book distils AFF’s work on climate change issues related to forests, trees and wildlife resources on the continent. This book is timely in that it highlights to all stakeholders, and in a systematic manner, the climate change issues relevant to the African forestry and wildlife sectors, with the view of increasing these sectors’ contribution, at various levels and fora, and to addressing the vagaries of climate change. The book also outlines the opportunities that climate change brings to the sectors.

Panel discussion, Chaired by Godwin Kowero

Niels Elers Koch, President, IUFRO, said that IUFRO has implemented its 2010-2014 strategy by creating six new task forces to deal with six cross-cutting thematic areas, viz.: forests for people; resources for the future; forest and water interactions; biodiversity and ecosystem services; forest bio-energy; and forests and climate change. He said that the food, fibre and fuel nexus of its work is based on all six disciplines.

Robert Nasi, CIFOR, contrasted pre-colonial agricultural landscapes in Africa, which were based on multi-crop production under low labour intensity, with post-colonial farming systems, which are monoculture and labour-intensive. He highlighted the need for re-analysing models of sustainable management and gave the example of timber, where 95% of a tree is wasted between the harvesting and production of furniture.

Phosiso Sola, CIFOR Regional Coordinator for Eastern and Southern Africa, emphasized that forests should pay for their existence through added value accountability, and called for policies that promote small scale production systems, forest management and crop production.

Ravi Prabhu, Deputy Director General Research, ICRAF, discussed ICRAF's projects to monitor the nutrient status of

soils across Africa and integrate food and fuel systems, and called for integrating knowledge systems and addressing tenure issues.

Paxie Chirwa, University of Pretoria, South Africa, highlighted the consideration of renewable energy by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), saying that whereas it is accepted that bioenergy is important for Africa, discussions have concentrated on impacts of biofuel on the environment, food production and local economies, instead of finding solutions. He recommended improved technologies for optimal solar power generation, noting solar energy is a constant resource in Africa.

Emmanuel Chidumayo, Senior Programme Officer-AFF, said that complaints about land-grabbing for biofuels by foreign investors should be discussed together with the role played by governments in these allocations. He emphasized the need for concrete data on land to inform policy, adding that Africa, being large and diverse in cultures, ecosystems and climatic conditions, needs a diversity of solutions. During the ensuing panel discussion, participants and panellists discussed: shortage of arable land in Africa; evaluation of forest ecosystems and PES; extensive use of charcoal production; and the problem of corruption.

On knowledge sharing, Koch underscored the role of international conferences in sharing information of best practices and policy briefs, and Prabhu mentioned major programmes at ICRAF to launch extension initiatives. Chipeta underscored the link between corruption and genuine scarcity, as well as irrelevant controls and complexity of procedures.

Responding to a question about undervaluation of forests, Sola stressed the need for proper natural resource accounting procedures. Participants further noted that: agricultural residue for bio-energy production should not be considered as available biomass since it is valued in farms for feeding animals and as organic matter for recycling into the soil; forest products can provide a valuable livelihood if communities can achieve value addition; final markets for forest products such as timber play a role in corruption and overexploitation in Africa; and land tenure issues in Africa need to be resolved as a way of containing land grabbing.



Policy Day Panellists

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The Editors.

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