



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

Speech by

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

During the Celebrations of 10th Anniversary of the African Forest Forum (AFF)

(delivered by Edward Kilawe, Forestry Officer, Sub regional Office)

22nd May, 2019, Nairobi, Kenya

**Honorable guest, Conservation Secretary, Ministry of Environment and
Forestry, Rep of Kenya**

Executive Secretary, AFF

Chair Governing Council of AFF

Chair of AFF members forum

Head of International Cooperation, Swedish Embassy- Addis Ababa

Representative of AUC

Representative of UNFF

Representative of RECs

Representative of ICRAF

**Representatives of other organizations and development partners present
here today**

All protocols observed

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- On behalf of the Regional Office for Africa, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, and of my own behalf as member of AFF, I would like to thank the African Forest Forum for having invited FAO to join AFF in its 10th Anniversary celebration.
- Today is the International Day on Biodiversity, celebrated this year under the theme (***Our biodiversity, our food, our health***). This is a great day for celebrating the AFF anniversary. Forests, trees and wildlife are critical for the

provision of biodiversity that is key and supports the multiple goods and services essential for human wellbeing and for a healthy environment, food security and nutrition. They are even more important in dryland ecosystems, such as those prevailing in the Africa region, to address critical issues of land degradation, desertification, mitigation of climate change effects and strengthening the adaptive capacity and the resilience of the people and their production systems.

- I commend AFF efforts in being among our partner champions in boosting the forestry agenda in Africa through the many initiatives they have led or contributed to for advancing sustainable forest management in Africa and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I therefore reiterate FAO's gratitude to AFF and the many partners in Africa for the excellent collaboration in the field of Forestry.
- Through the rich and outstanding partnership in forestry with AFF, AUC and many other key partners such as other UN sister agencies and the CGIAR system, FAO has been able to build a strong programme to support Africa's regional and country strategies and policies. This cooperation has been focused on developing and strengthening forest policies and capacities for the sustainable management of natural resources, forest health and socio-economic development and equity, development of community forestry, climate change adaptation and mitigation and forest education.
- Just to highlight few areas where FAO have been working hand in hand with AFF, the African Union Commission and other partners:
 - FAO was key partner during implementation of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM II) programme in Africa: Lessons learnt from 2005-2007, which was jointly implemented by African Academy of Science/AFORNET network-KSLA/Sweden and FAO; and it was this programme which led to the establishment of AFF, hence today is a big landmark to all those who contributed to this big cause.

- the development of the African Union AU Sustainable Forest Management programme to be submitted for validation in July 2019 here in Nairobi;
- the support to AUC and The Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa (NGARA) for developing and adopting its Strategic Framework (2017-2030). We are now taking this collaboration under a next level to support its implementation.
- AFF has been also contributing and participating actively to the FAO forestry bodies such as, the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission in the regional, as well as the Committee on Forestry (COFO) at the global level. The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission is a very important regional platform, uniting member countries and other partners including AFF for discussion and exchange of experiences on forestry and wildlife development issues and in promoting landscape approaches to boosting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region. We are looking forward to further collaboration and engagement of AFF for a successful organization of the next session (23rd session) that will be held in November 2019 in South Africa.
- FAO has been also collaborating with AFF and partners in drylands initiatives namely, Great Green Wall of Sahara and Sahel initiative (GGWSSI), and recently in the development of GEF-7 Dryland Sustainable Landscapes (DSL) impact programme led by FAO, and involving Miombo and Mopane countries of Southern Africa.
- AFF is part of the FAO Advisory Panel on Forest knowledge, an FAO Forestry's education initiatives established to promote education and knowledge initiatives at the regional and global level. Likewise, FAO at regional level has been prominent and observer member of AFF governing council.

-
- Last but not least, I wish to recall the important role of Heads of Forest and Wildlife institutions and AFF in shaping FAO's work on forestry in Africa.
 - As I conclude my remarks, by thanking again AFF and excellent leadership of Prof Godwin Kowero (Executive Secretary) and his team, for AFF contribution to Africa Forestry Agenda and wishing a happy anniversary and long lasting partnership!
 - I thank you.