



Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 8 | Issue 1 | African Forest Forum

Welcome

African Forest Forum (AFF) is pleased to present its latest newsletter. In it you will find information on what the institution has been doing in the broad area of African forestry, as well as efforts that AFF has made to link its work with what is happening globally that either affects forests and trees outside forests and/ or is influenced by these resources.

We welcome your feedback which you can email to us at:
exec.sec@afforum.org.

Cover photo: Tree planting by Ms. Ulla Andrén, the Regional Head of Development Cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa at the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Prof Godwin Kowero, Executive Secretary-CEO AFF; presided over by Ms. Monica Kalenda, Senior Deputy Director Kenya Forest Service during AFF's tenth year anniversary celebrations held on 22 May 2019 at the Karura Forest in Nairobi, Kenya.

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Regional Validation Workshop: African Union Sustainable Forest Management Programme Framework

The regional workshop to validate the African Union Sustainable Forest Management Programme Framework was held on 8 to 10 July 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. The workshop was organised by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It brought together 43 African Union member states, represented by directors and senior experts from forestry departments of member countries, representatives of five Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), and partner organizations. The African Forest Forum also participated in this important event.

The overall objective of the workshop was to finalise the African Union Sustainable Forest Management Programme Framework (SFMP) through a technical review, and to build consensus on the framework prior to submission for approval by the African Union Ministerial Specialised Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.

The African Union SFMP was developed in response to the 2014 Malabo Declaration of the 23rd Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, Decision “Assembly/AU/Dec.538(XXIII)” on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods.

The Declaration directed the AUC, in collaboration with African ministers responsible for forestry and energy, to put in place the SFMP to assist AU member states and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to sustainably manage and develop their forest sectors for socio-economic development and environmental protection.

The SFMP was drafted through a series of experts’ and stakeholders’ consultations, and the validation workshop was aimed at ensuring that African countries agree on the technical content of the document. The African Forest Forum, working with several African experts, put together the first draft of the sustainable forest management programme framework for Africa, that was later validated and improved on before this second validation workshop. This process was facilitated by a grant from FAO, and also involved the participation of staff from AUC.



Participants of the Regional Validation Workshop on the “African Union Sustainable Forest Management Programme Framework” held from 8 to 10 July 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya

In his opening speech Mr Nyambe Harsen Nyambe, the Head of Division for Environment, Climate Change, Water and Land Management at AUC stressed the importance of the African Union SFMP, in terms of providing strategic guidance to the sector, serving as a basis for addressing forestry related challenges on the continent including illegal exploitation and trade of forest resources, and for partnerships. He also called upon the delegates to ensure that the framework is aligned to the Africa development blueprint, Agenda 2063, which calls for all forests to be conserved and sustainably used by 2063.

Participants deliberated on the content of the draft AU-SFMP and assessed the extent to which it would contribute to sustainable management and development of forest sectors for socio-economic development and environmental protection of African countries. After extensive deliberations the participants revised the objectives, priorities, structure and other issues in the document. The agreed priorities will guide actions on the value of forests, markets, processing and trade; capacity development and knowledge management; policies and institutional frameworks; restoration of degraded forests and landscapes; and partnerships and resource mobilisation. The participants also considered a mechanism for the implementation of the AU-SFMP, as well as a road map for it.

The African Forest Forum was represented by senior staff at the AFF Secretariat namely, Drs Marie Louise Avana-Tientcheu, Doris Mutta, Noel H Bouda and Vincent Oeba. They also took the opportunity to share some of the knowledge products recently launched at the celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of AFF, and secured contacts with countries where AFF is poorly represented such as Tunisia, Egypt, Guinea Bissau and Morocco.

AFF's side event at the UNFF 14, New York, USA, on the implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in African Countries

The 14th session of the United Nations Forum of Forest (UNFF14) was held in New York on 6 to 10 May 2019, with a focus on three thematic priorities: (i) Forests and climate change; (ii) Forests, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and employment; and (iii) Forests, peaceful and inclusive societies, reduced inequality, education, and inclusive institutions at all levels. In view to contribute to the first thematic priority on *Forests and climate change*, the African Forest Forum scientific team organised a side event at the UN Headquarters on 6 May 2019 on the theme “Experiences on NDCs implementation in some African countries in the context of Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Uses”.

The side event was jointly organized by AFF, Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) and Bern University of Applied Sciences with the aim to share experiences on forest based NDCs implementation in 52 African countries and to draw lessons that would help strengthen the design of forest interventions in future NDCs from 2020. Scheduled among the first side events of the UNFF14 meeting, it attracted nearly 40 participants representing mainly African delegates, but also delegates from other continents. The panelists were: Dr. Marie Louise Avana-Tientcheu (AFF), Dr. Vincent Onguso Oeba (AFF), Mr. Raymond Mdomba Ngoye (COMIFAC) and Prof Jurgen Blaser (HALF, Switzerland). The event was moderated by Prof Godwin Kowero (AFF).

In their presentation, Marie-Louise AVANA and Vincent Oeba visited the road map of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) initiated at the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris in 2015 where all Members' parties agreed “to contain climate change, accelerate and intensify actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future”. Although all the 55 African countries had, by then, signed the agreement, four of them were yet to submit their nationally determined contributions by May 2019, namely, Angola, Libya, Senegal and South Sudan. By 2030, also known as the turning point for the SDGs, countries will be expected to submit their 4th NDCs after the two global stock assessments of 2023 and 2028.



Participants of the UNFF14 side event organized by AFF on 6 May 2019, in New York under the theme “Experiences on NDCs implementation in some African countries in the context of Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Uses”

The African Forest Forum in its project on *African forests, people and climate change*, and in collaboration with its partners, undertook studies in 2017 to assess forest-based adaptation and mitigation activities in African countries' NDCs with the aim to draw lessons that will help strengthen the design of forestry interventions in their future climate action plans. Some of the key findings obtained indicated that the share of Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Uses (AFOLU) categories in African countries' NDCs varied between 20-90% of the countries' adaptation-mitigation options; thus, indicating the importance of these sub-sectors in their climate action strategies.

Taking examples of some countries' projections for mitigations in their NDCs, the presenters showed that for Ghana, a target was set for a reduction from 15% to 45% of the country's emission reference level if enabling conditions are provided; whereas, for Cameroon the target was 32% of its emission level for 2010, based mainly on improved agricultural practices, among others. For Kenya, restoration of forests and degraded lands, rehabilitation of degraded forests and REDD+ were projected to account for 39.2 MtCO₂e by 2030.

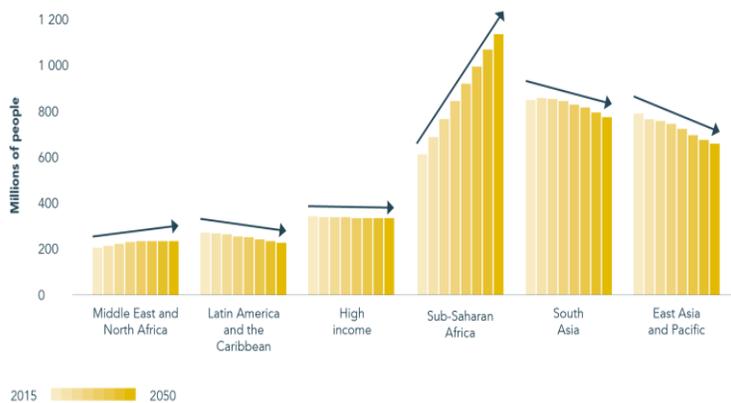
It was noted that 66.7% of the African countries' NDCs were committed on “Business as Usual” basis, and only 18.5% were targeting adjustments to policies in their climate Action Plans. Among the main identified gaps explaining Africa's guarded caution for better engagement in their NDCs, were the need for enhanced transparency and policy coherence frameworks, as well as capacity development, resource mobilisation and research. Hence, capacity building, technology transfer and adequate funding were rated respectively at 88%, 84% and 98%, by African countries, as the main conditions and determinants for implementing AFOLU activities in their NDCs.

As part of its contribution towards filling these gaps, AFF is implementing, in its current project on climate change, activities that will contribute to improving African forestry stakeholders' capacity for articulating forest-based climate change adaptation and mitigation in their national forestry sectors, NDCs, REDD+, International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) and relevant SDGs. Among the targeted outputs of the project are the identification of opportunities and synergy outcomes provided through a re-organization of mitigation and adaptation processes in the country strategies and policy frameworks; as well as improved coordination, multi-stakeholders planning, governance arrangements and investments flows.

Promoting youth involvement in African forestry

According to the *2019 United Nation's World Population Prospects Report*, the world's population is expected to increase by 2 billion persons in the next 30 years, from 7.7 billion currently to 9.7 billion in 2050.

Africa will account for the highest population growth with an additional 1.3 billion people on the continent. It is estimated that Africa will be home to more than 25 per cent of the world's under-25 population. Over the next three decades, sub-Saharan Africa's youth population will increase by 522 million while the rest of the world's youth population declines by 220 million.



Note: Country groups follow World Bank classifications. Youth defined as population age 0 - 24 years old.
Source: U.N. World Population Prospects 2017 Revision, Medium Variant Projections.

Governments have been under pressure to cater for the needs and aspirations of the growing youth population. Formal employment opportunities in the public and private sector are highly insufficient to absorb the high numbers of youth graduating from high school and tertiary colleges. Unemployment and underemployment of the youth in Africa ranks highest. This is actually a ticking time bomb for African youth who cannot find jobs.

The African Forest Forum (AFF) recognizes the unique opportunities and challenges that a youthful population poses to the forestry sector and mainstreams these considerations in its annual Plan of Work. In particular, making forest-based curricula more attractive to the youth through focusing on entrepreneurial and business skills development.

A successful example in this regard, is the collaboration between the AFF and the School of Agriculture, Forest and Food Sciences (HAFL) of Bern University of Applied Sciences in Zollikofen, Switzerland. Through this partnership, students are prepared for specialized positions in international organizations, management positions in private sector organizations, internationally-oriented civil society organizations and research institutions.

Members of the private sector, civil society and academia are regularly invited to the classes to enable networking between students and players in the international forest development context. To-date, AFF has signed 20 MoUs with African universities whose students have been awarded research fellowships.

At the organizational level, AFF has set up, in its Governing Council, a "Youths in Forestry" chapter to promote their inclusion in AFF Governing Council deliberations and decisions, in addition to promoting, among the youth the awareness of the economic and environmental values of forests and trees resources as well as to their critical security to human, animal and plant life on the continent.

AFF Accredited to the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UN Environment Programme

The African Forest Forum (AFF) on 14th August 2019 was accredited to the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UN Environment. Accreditation to UN Environment grants observer status to AFF to the Environment Assembly and its subsidiary bodies and “is the main entry point for major groups and stakeholders into policy dialogue at UN Environment.” This move allows AFF to participate in the work of UN Environment’s Governing Bodies, such as the UNEA of UN Environment and the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

UN accreditation gives AFF a new window for international learning and partnerships to influence actions that could better situate forestry in the path of sustainable development of African nations.

The fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) is expected to take place during the last week of February 2021, in Nairobi, Kenya, as agreed during UNEA-3 in December 2017.

14th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (COP 14)

Restore Land, Sustain Future

Hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India, the 14th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 14) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) convened on 2 to 13 September 2019 under the theme, “Restore Land, Sustain Future.”



Prof. Godwin Kowero, ES-CEO AFF at an ICRAF side event held during UNCCD COP 14 in New Delhi India

An estimated 8,000 participants from government, civil society, academic institutions and the private sector took part in the two-week meeting, which also coincided with the 18th session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 18) and the 14th session of the UNCCD Committee on Science and Technology (CST 14).

The COP agreed to increase and further elaborate action on the ground to ensure that the Convention’s goals for 2018-2030 are achieved. During the closing plenary, UNCCD Executive Secretary Ibrahim Thiaw highlighted four key messages from the meeting:

- Land restoration is the cheapest solution to climate change and biodiversity loss;
- Land restoration makes business sense if regulations and incentives to reward investment are in place;
- Drought preparedness and response are critical in the face of climate change; and
- To put people first is to ensure gender balance, engage youth, and secure land rights.

COP 14 ended on a note of optimism that there is a growing alignment of the land, climate, and biodiversity agendas, and, with its sharpened focus on land restoration, the UNCCD can offer cost-effective and sustainable solutions to some of the most entrenched global challenges today.

AFF turns ten

On May 22, 2019, the African Forest Forum (AFF) celebrated its tenth anniversary with the launch of a book titled, *“The State of Forestry in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges”*. Also launched at the event were eight forestry related training compendiums on basic science of climate change (3), carbon markets and trade, climate modelling (3) and scenario development (1), and international dialogues and processes in climate change (1).

For more than a decade, AFF along with its partners, has worked on the science-policy-development interface that is crucial for enhancing sustainable forest management (SFM) practices on the African continent, as well as proffering solutions to the many challenges afflicting the sector. In this regard, the eight training compendiums were developed in a pedagogical manner to support capacity building and skills development on the continent to facilitate better handling of climate change issues in forestry.

The compendiums were developed by several expert teams and validated by forestry stakeholders at a workshop organized jointly with the University of Ouagadougou from 12-16 March 2018 in Burkina Faso. Thereafter, they were peer-reviewed by a number of experts before being edited for production.

The compendiums are tailored for different audiences, including those at professional and technical levels, as well as for guiding delivery of short courses. The latter also target extension agents and civil society organisations that interact with local communities; and this is the approach AFF has taken to get its information reach local communities.

The training compendiums are the first of their kind in Africa, and most likely in the world, and are based on demands by African forestry and related training institutions expressed through a need’s assessment conducted by AFF.



L-R: Prof. Godwin Kowero, Executive Secretary-CEO AFF; Mr. Gideon Gathaara, Conservation Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forestry; Mr. Macarthy Oyebo, Chair AFF Governing Council; Prof. Demel Teketay, Chair AFF Members Forum during the launch of the AFF book titled, *“The State of Forestry in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges”* and training compendiums on climate change.

They were:

- [Basic science of climate change: a compendium for professional training in African forestry](#)
- [Basic science of climate change: a compendium for technical training in African forestry](#)
- [Basic science of climate change: a compendium for short courses in African forestry](#)
- [Carbon markets and trade: a compendium for professional training in African forestry](#)
- [Carbon markets and trade: a compendium for technical training in African forestry](#)
- [Carbon markets and trade: a compendium for short courses in African forestry](#)
- [Climate modelling and scenario development: a compendium for professional training in African forestry](#)
- [International dialogues, processes and mechanisms on climate change: compendium for professional and technical training in African forestry](#)

These compendiums are already freely available on the AFF website and will be complemented by six others that are under preparation, in a pedagogical manner, on climate change adaptation and climate change mitigation in African Forestry. All these compendiums guide the development of a standard or uniform approach in building the capacity and skills on climate change issues related to forestry among African forestry stakeholders in the various African sub-regions.

The training compendiums will also provide guidance on addressing national and regional issues on climate change and forestry by other interested stakeholders.

In an effort to complement FAO's regular reports on the global state of forestry resources and on related aspects, AFF also launched the book on *"The State of Forestry in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges"* at the event.

The issue provides a broad overview of some of the most pressing concerns in the African forestry sector, with the intention that subsequent issues of this publication will dwell on other equally important concerns that could not be accommodated in this issue. AFF plans to produce such issues, with potential partners, once every 2-4 years, resources permitting.

The 10th anniversary event jointly organized by AFF, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), was held at the Amani Gardens, Karura Forest grounds in Nairobi, Kenya. The occasion was attended by over 200 participants from across Africa and outside the continent, representing governments and public agencies, international organizations, the private sector, academic and research institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs) and the media.

The celebrations were also marked by a number of week-long events that included: a regional workshop on 'sharing of information, knowledge and experiences in African forestry'; and two regional training workshops on (1) 'sustainable forest management and leadership for policy makers in Africa' and (2) 'forest governance for Eastern and Southern Africa.' With an impressive list of speakers from many partners, the workshops showcased results obtained from the work of by AFF and its partners during the last five years.



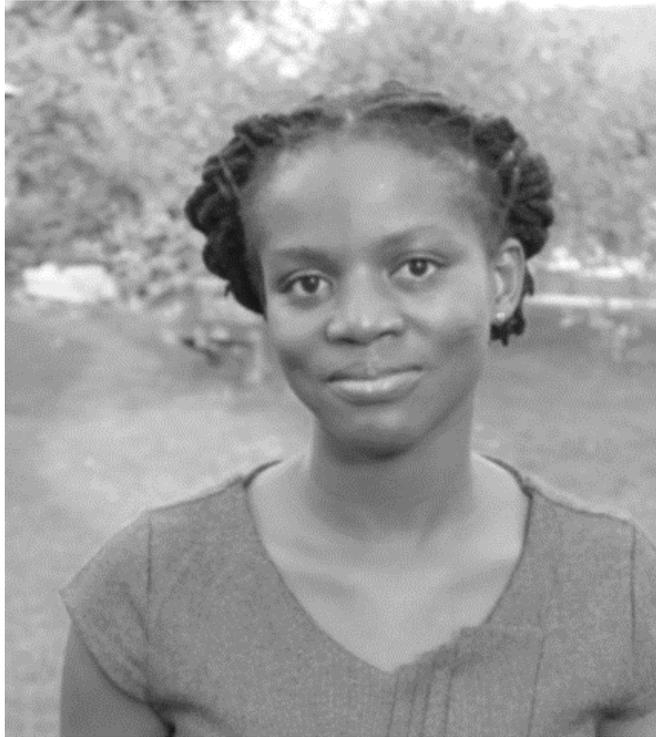
L-R: Dr. Doris Mutta, Senior Programme Officer (SPO)-AFF; Prof. Godwin Kowero, Executive Secretary-CEO AFF; Mr. Gideon Gathaara, Conservation Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forestry; Mr. Macarthy Oyebo, Chair AFF Governing Council; Prof. Demel Teketay, Chair AFF Members Forum.

"The knowledge products unveiled during the 10th year anniversary of the AFF on 22/05/2019 will no doubt contribute meaningfully to forestry training on the continent and also come handy in field research and knowledge transfer to our students".

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Dr. T.O. AMUSA Ph.D.

Ag. Head of Department, Department of Forest Sources Management, University of Ilorin, Nigeria



Testimonial

“The African Forest Forum in 2015 awarded me a full-time scholarship to study Master of Life Sciences with a major in International Management of Forest Industries in Bern, Switzerland. My Master study commenced in February 2016 and ended in September 2017”. “Based on the accepted thesis proposal and my personal interest in cocoa agroforestry, I wrote a master thesis titled “Index-based insurance: An adaptation to climate change induced risks in cocoa production in Ghana”. The thesis aimed to add to the knowledge base on cocoa farmers' perception of climate change and of insurance, in particular index insurance as an adaptation option to the changing climate. It further built on farmers' willingness to pay for index insurance premium and institutions' capacity to provide index insurance policies to farmers. To a large extent, the study has exposed me to practical ways to address issues pertaining to sustainable forest management from a global perspective. I was able to meet people from all over the world and build a large professional network. The program has granted me many professional opportunities and opened doors for me”.

Lydia Afriyie (Ghana)-Beneficiary of the AFF-HAFL
Scholarship programme (2016- 2017)



Testimonial

“While Malawi has been involved in the development of NDCs, there is limited knowledge in relation to land use, land-use change, and forestry (LULUCF). Thus, there is need to understand the drivers of these processes and the associated impact on floristic composition, population structure of the Miombo woodlands. This will also inform the future monitoring and adaptive management in the entire Malawi in different forest management regimes vis a viz; Co-management and Government.

The AFF postgraduate research scholarship program has facilitated my exposure to different techniques for evaluating LULUCF. In the next 2-5 years, I see myself being a lecturer at one of the renowned Universities and an advisory member on natural resources management related issues”.

Monica F. Gondwe, PhD Student (Forest Science),
University of Pretoria



Students in implementing the forest management plan at Busogo campus. Photo credit: Eng. Maniriho Festus, University of Rwanda

Testimonial

I attended AFF's Regional training course on "Forest Certification for Eastern and Southern African sub-region"; held on December 7-11, 2015 in Mombasa, Kenya. As a one of the lecturers in the Department of Forestry and Nature Conservation, in the University of Rwanda; in March 2016, a Seminar on the relevance and an overview of forest certification was offered to the faculty lectures and students especially those from the concerned department of forestry, at Busogo campus. Hence, a decision was made by the department council to incorporate an introductory course on forest certification during the revision of forest curriculum. This initiative was followed by development of the Forest Management and Investment Plan 2016-2020 to serve as a demonstration for the students as well as the community. In addition, forest officers at district level and forest practitioners in Rwanda have also been trained on forest certification standards with 325 certificates issued. The trainees came from public and private institutions under 1 PAREF-Be2. Key modules covered include: Forests maps and inventory data management; Forest inventory; Agroforestry through Farmer Field School (FFS) approach; Fruit trees management; Silvicultural treatments; Harvesting techniques.

Eng. Maniriho Festus, University of Rwanda

Upcoming events



XXV IUFRO World Congress 2019
September 29, to October 5, 2019
Curitiba, Brazil



Climate Change Summit Africa
16-18 October 2019
Accra, Ghana



African Forestry and Wildlife
Commission
18-22 November 2019
Skukuza, South Africa



UNFCCC COP 25
2-13 December 2019
Parque Bicentenario Cerrillos,
Santiago de Chile

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