



**REGIONAL WEBINARS CONCEPT NOTE**

**ON**

**SHARING OF INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES ON NATIONAL FOREST  
GOVERNANCE RESPONSES TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND THE  
CONTRIBUTION OF DRYLAND FOREST RESOURCES IN BUILDING CLIMATE  
RESILIENT COMMUNITIES IN AFRICA**

**JULY 2021**

## **1. Introduction**

The African Forest Forum (AFF) is a pan-African non-governmental organization with its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. It is an association of individuals who share the quest for and commitment to the sustainable management, use and conservation of the forest and tree resources of Africa for the socio- economic wellbeing of its people and for the stability and improvement of its environment. The purpose of AFF is to provide a platform and create an enabling environment for independent and objective analysis, advocacy and advice on relevant policy and technical issues pertaining to achieving sustainable management, use and conservation of Africa's forest and tree resources as part of efforts to reduce poverty, promote gender equality, and economic and social development. Through all its programmes and activities, AFF seeks to promote the empowerment of all marginalized groups particularly women who continue to be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and whose representation, priorities and needs are rarely adequately addressed in the forestry sector.

To this end, AFF, with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) is implementing two projects namely "*African forests, people and climate c hange*" and "*Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa*". Both projects seek to generate and share knowledge and information through partnerships in ways that will provide inputs into policy options and capacity building efforts for improved forest management that will better address climate change impacts as well as contribute to poverty alleviation and environmental protection in Africa. Specifically, both projects aim to enhance national forest governance by strengthening the capacity of African stakeholders to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change policies and initiatives related to forestry. To pursue this objective the projects analyzed national responses to the Paris Agreement and generated knowledge to guide improvement of forest governance processes for enhancing forest management that responds better to adverse climate change impacts. In efforts to building resilience to adverse climate change impacts for local communities in drylands, the projects have also explored the use of dryland resources and commodities to promote nature-based entrepreneurship opportunities that enhance livelihoods, national incomes and employment.

## **2. Background**

Good forest governance is associated with transparency, participation, and accountability in order to achieve positive social, environmental and economic outcomes in the most efficient and effective way. Attainment of effective global forest governance is of interest and requires concerted efforts at all levels. At global level, forest challenges are addressed through institutionalizing various forest instruments that are legally and non-legally binding in order to contain climate change, among others. Forest issues are globally discussed at United Nations Forest Forum (UNFF), the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO), Conference of Parties (COPs) of environmental conventions such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), among others, where key resolutions and agreements are reached for mainstreaming into national programmes, plans, strategies, policies and laws to ensure

sustainable use of forest and tree resources. For instance, Article 6 of the Paris Agreement (PA) has various clauses with major focus on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in reducing GHG emissions while fostering sustainable development and at the same time promoting adaptation ambitions in response to the impacts of climate change and variability.

In efforts to support African governments in addressing climate change impacts, AFF has undertaken initiatives to strengthen African forestry stakeholders' capacity to respond to the Paris Agreement and related global climate change agreements and recommendations in forestry sector in order to strengthen national forest governance, among other areas. To this end, AFF conducted studies which revealed that while many African governments have signed, ratified or acceded to forest and climate change related international agreements, their compliance to the provisions of the agreements has been limited. Only a few African countries have taken steps to comply with the agreements. Moreover, the integration of the provisions of the agreements into national policies, plans and activities has not been systematic and the approaches for doing so have been uncoordinated. Consequently, most African governments are yet to fulfil most of their international obligations on forestry and have not realised the benefits thereof.

Of particular importance to these agreements is how forest resources could better contribute to communities and ecosystems resilience; and such agenda is of higher relevance in drylands ecosystems. In light of this, AFF has also focused on strengthening the understanding of measures to increase the resilience to adverse climate change impacts among drylands communities focusing on gums and resins value chains. The development of gums and resins value chains is considered as alternative livelihood option to be promoted as a coping strategy to improve the resilience of climate sensitive populations, especially women and the youth, for their improved wellbeing. In fact, dry forests are endowed with different types of Acacia, Boswellia, Commiphora and other woody species exuding gums and resins (gum Arabic, frankincense, myrrh and hagar); and are also providing many socioeconomic, cultural, medicinal and environmental benefits. However, underdeveloped markets and value chains and lack of financial capital and technical skills are key constraints in improving the gums and resins sector.

In order to contribute to filling these knowledge and capacity gaps, AFF in collaboration with the Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa (NGARA) undertook studies aimed at analysing the state of production, trade and marketing in gums and resins and to assess value chain actors' capacity in selected producing countries. The findings from these studies will inform the improvement of Africa's capacity to enhance the gums and resins value chains for improved livelihood outcomes in the context of developing climate change resilience of vulnerable communities, including women and youth, who depend on these resources and commodities for their livelihoods.

The above-mentioned studies undertaken in 2019 focused on:

- in-depth analysis of national forest governance responses to the Paris Agreement (PA) and related global climate change policies and initiatives in ten (10) selected countries from Southern, Eastern, Western, Central African and Sahel sub-regions.

- assessment of the state of production, trade in gums and resins, capacity needs amongst value chain actors, and policy frameworks in selected countries very sensitive to climate change namely: Burkina Faso, Niger, Kenya and Tanzania.

The analysis has generated updated information on: (a) level of uptake of recommendations from the Paris Agreement and related global initiatives in national forestry instruments. These findings will be valuable in informing policy makers and other stakeholders towards improved compliance and realization of the benefits; (b) status of gums and resins value chains in targeted countries as well as the state of existing natural resources and their management options, including policy and capacity interventions needed to improve the sector at different levels.

The findings and key recommendations on ***the national forestry responses to the Paris Agreement*** covered the following areas:

- areas of overlap and synergy in the national forestry sector and other relevant global and regional climate change related policies and initiatives;
- knowledge and skills gaps among African forestry stakeholders in mainstreaming global and regional climate change policies and initiatives into national forestry policies, plans and activities and their coordination; as well as, on the levels of measurement, reporting and verification of forest-based mitigation, adaptation and finance in NDCs;
- gaps in the development and reporting of national forest sector contributions to SDGs and NDCs, as well as key lessons learnt in the development and implementation of the first forest based NDCs in Africa;

The findings and key recommendations ***on gums and resins value chains covered*** the following:

- trends in the production and status of gums and resins resources in selected sites in the selected countries;
- types and profiles of gums and resins exploited and traded by each of the different value chain actors,
- value chain analysis including actors and their roles, the level of marketing and trade, with special focus on women and youth;
- relevant policies, laws and institutional frameworks in the selected countries;
- training needs amongst actors in gums and resins; and based on identified gaps, updated existing training curriculum and manuals for validation before wide sharing amongst African forestry stakeholders.

It is in this context that AFF in its annual work plan of activities for 2021, is organizing sub-regional webinars that will incorporate a media event aimed at sharing these findings and recommendations as well as information, knowledge and experiences among the African stakeholders working on climate change and forestry issues. The outcome of these events will enable AFF and its stakeholders to develop a strategy to: (i) provide a forum for dialogue to enhance collaboration and mechanisms of sharing experiences in the African continent on climate change and related Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) issues; (ii) deliberate

on findings from the two studies to contribute to evidence-based policy formulation and implementation in order to enhance interest in, and better inform investors to the sector; (iii) strengthen exchange amongst specialists and negotiators to various forestry related processes like those under UNFF, UNCCD and UNFCCC; (iv) promote and facilitate development of policy and institutional frameworks that enhance forest related adaptation and mitigation mechanisms in Africa, as well as for improving forest governance.

### **3. Expected results and outputs**

- (i) Enhanced exchange of experiences and skills among stakeholders on forestry and climate change related international processes.
- (ii) Policy and institutional frameworks that integrate forest related adaptation and mitigation mechanisms in Africa identified and promoted among forestry stakeholders ;
- (iii) Policy and institutional frameworks that hold potential to improve forest governance on the continent;
- (iv) Appropriate capacity building approaches for mainstreaming decisions from international discourses related to forestry and climate change, as well as for reporting of forest-based SDGs and NDCs at national, regional and international levels strengthened.
- (v) A better understanding and appreciation of the potential contribution of gums and resins value chains in building local communities' resilience to adverse climate change impacts; and actions required to enhance their contributions to rural livelihoods

In order to achieve these outputs, the results emanating from studies undertaken by AFF on national forest governance; responses to the Paris Agreement (PA) and related global climate change policies and initiatives; and on state of production and trade in gums and resins in selected dryland countries will be presented.

### **4. Venue and duration**

Two sub-regional webinars are scheduled, one for Central and West, and the other planned for Eastern and Southern Africa using the hybrid approach. Overall, 12 national face-to-face meetings will be organized and digitally connected to regional experts, AFF Secretariat and other stakeholders willing to participate remotely. The two webinars are planned to take place for a duration of 3 days each, from August 30 to September 1, 2021, for the West and Central African subregion, and from 6 to 9 September for the Eastern and Southern African.

### **5. Participants**

The event will gather about 20 participants per country from public forest administrations, non-governmental organizations, research, academia, media institutions, private sector as

well as youth and women-based organizations engaged in the fields of climate change, forestry and related sectors in sub-Saharan Africa. The target countries include Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Cameroon, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Botswana, Zambia, Niger, DR Congo, Mali. However, interested stakeholders from other countries are also invited to register and attend virtually

Forestry stakeholders within and outside target countries interested to attend the webinars are invited to register online using the following links:

Register in advance for the west and Central African Webinar to be held from from August 30 to September 1 using :

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwpduGgpzgsEtP5dtAx7gkKR08wZeE8W6Vw>

Register in advance for the Eastern and Southern African Webinar to be held from 6 to 8 September:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYvcemvqDMiGNHDLcxsCB6nznpyntBU28Xo>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting