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**OPENING ADDRESS BY GUEST OF HONOUR**

**PROF. SUZANA AUGUSTINO**

**DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR – PLANNING, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

**THE NELSON MANDELA AFRICAN INSTITUTION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**DURING**

**THE REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON FOREST PLANNING AND FOREST  
MANAGEMENT IN DIFFERENT FOREST TYPES IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN  
AFRICA**

**ON 24<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2023, LUSH GARDEN HOTEL ARUSHA, TANZANIA**

**The Executive Secretary of the African Forest Forum, Prof. Godwin Kowero,**

**Representative of the East African Community, Mr. Dismas Mwakila,**

**Chairman, AFF Project Steering and Advisory Committee, Prof. Labode Popoola**

**Workshop resource persons and delegates,**

**The representatives of Governments, Non-Governmental Organisations, and  
Private sector,**

**The representatives of Academia, Research, and Media,**

**All participants including those joining us virtually,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

First and foremost let me thank our Almighty God for making this day and the entire event within week possible!

Secondly, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Nelson Mandela African Institution for Science and Technology in Arusha, Tanzania, I want to thank the African Forest Forum for organizing, together with my institution this important regional training workshop on forest planning and forest management in different forest types in Eastern and Southern Africa in Arusha, Tanzania. I also thank AFF for providing me with the opportunity to meet with a distinguished group of experts and forestry practitioners, passionate individuals committed to the sustainable management, use and conservation of forest resources, for the socio-economic well-being of the people of Africa and stability of the environment.

Thirdly, may I also commend AFF for their dedication in contributing to development of strategic human capacity in African institutions to strengthen sustainable forest management through enhancing capacity for forest planning and management for improved productivity of our forests in the context of current, new and emerging challenges and opportunities.

I congratulate the African Forest Forum for their excellent logistical arrangements in bringing all the distinguished participants from Eastern and Southern Africa and beyond. I am informed that more than thirteen countries in Eastern and Southern Africa are represented in this workshop in-person. The countries represented are Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Seychelles, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. I wish to thank all of you for making time to participate and I extend a warm welcome to our country the United Republic of Tanzania and in a special way to a beautiful City of Arusha with attractive weather condition. I believe you will be able to visit some of our very interesting tourist attractions. I am also aware that more than 150 registered participants from the rest of Africa and beyond are joining us virtually.

**Ladies and Gentlemen!**

We are all aware that continuing gaps in capacities of African forestry and allied institutions represents a major constraint to the design and implementation of forestry management programs. Further, in the context of changing socio-political, cultural and economic environment shortfall in these processes mean

that the capacity of Africa's forests to supply forest ecosystem goods and services is not fully harnessed and thus undervalued.

Through its Sida supported project on *Strengthening management and use of forest ecosystems for sustainable development in Africa*, the AFF has recently generated up to date knowledge on forest planning and management processes in Africa. It has also developed tools that will be instrumental in enhancing stakeholders' capacity for forest management to formulate sound approaches for increased supply of ecosystem goods and services. On behalf of the AFF Secretariat and entire members, we wish to thank the Government of Sweden for the support to African forestry.

The AFF study revealed that most of the plans on Africa's forests are not based on recent national forest inventories, but rather based on inadequate and inaccurate information. Most plans reflect low knowledge and skills employed in their development. In most countries, other constraints to forest planning include inadequate financial, human, and technical capacities for forest planning by governments; over-dependence on donor support; and institutional and administrative constraints. Gender perspectives including the engagement women and youth are not adequately contextualised. Further, information on assessment of Africa's forests, stand dynamics, and capacity to meet increasing demands of growing populations on a sustainable basis is largely lacking. The implication is that forests in African countries are not managed sustainably due to these shortfalls.

As forests continue to play increasingly critical roles to the welfare of people through food security, energy source, water sources, and survival of animals and plants, as well as to the protection of the environment, the development of sound management plans to guide sustainable supply of forest ecosystem goods and services is inevitable.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen!**

It is in this context that AFF has developed training guidelines entitled *Training guidelines for forest planning and forest management in Africa* to guide capacity

building efforts aimed at equipping African stakeholders with better knowledge, skills and best practices for effective forest planning and forest management activities in order to improve the supply of ecosystem goods and services and eventually raising the contribution of the forest sector to human wellbeing, climate resilient economic growth, and healthy ecosystems in the African continent.

These guidelines are timely given that in the past decade, several global environmental issues have emerged that have a significant bearing on forestry in Africa. The global developmental landscape has witnessed increased attention by the international community on the effects of environmental deterioration that has contributed to climate change, land degradation, biodiversity loss and emergence of new diseases.

Notably, there is a growing consensus that forests and trees can play crucial roles in addressing these crises and moving towards sustainable economies. The role of forestry in the transition to low carbon, green economy and green sustainability; its potential for carbon trade; and potential contribution to Nature Based solutions are some of the current opportunities. These consequently call for building appropriate capacities to improve the understanding of such issues and address them in line with international best practices and requisite planning processes.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

May I urge all of us to take this opportunity to share experiences and knowledge on best practice on approaches to improve forest planning and management at all levels including community, national and regional levels. When successfully delivered, we will be securing a future in which Africa's forestry stakeholders have

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the capacity, tools and knowledge to make the necessary interventions for continued growth and contribution of forestry in sustainable development.

My institution has a keen interest in developing strategic human capacity to support our efforts towards achieving sustainable development goals and therefore attaches great value to this workshop. We see ourselves as beneficiaries of this process that AFF has initiated and we look forward to increased collaboration on this and other issues.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to wish you success in this endeavour and declare the Five days workshop *on Forest Planning and Forest Management in Different Forest Types in Eastern and Southern Africa* open.

**ASANTENI SANA!**

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH!**

**MERCY BEAUCOUP!**