



PRE-CONGRESS WORKSHOP TO THE XIV WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

Theme: Forests, people and environment: Some perspectives from Africa

Date: 4 – 5 September, 2015

Organizer: The African Forest Forum in collaboration with the African Union Commission, The Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa, the Centre for Sustainable Development- University of Ibadan and the Forest Research Network of Sub-Saharan Africa

Venue: Durban, South Africa

1. Introduction

The African Forest Forum in partnership with the African Union Commission, The Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa, the Centre for Sustainable Development-University of Ibadan, and the Forest Research Network of Sub-Saharan Africa is organizing a Pre-XIV World Forestry Congress workshop on the theme: *Forests, people and environment: Some perspectives from Africa* on 4 to 5 September 2015 in Durban, South Africa, just before the XIV World Forestry Congress. The workshop will bring together African forestry stakeholders including those from national governments, civil society organizations, academia and research; in addition to important groups like youth and women. They will discuss important trends relevant to the African forestry sector with a view to enhancing the roles of forests and trees in national economic development and poverty alleviation; improving food security and nutrition and; enhancing environmental stability and other forest values. The workshop will comprise of plenary sessions on key themes that are also linked to the XIV World Forestry Congress theme, as well as break-out sessions. The workshop will be followed by a meeting, on 6 September 2015, of all AFF members at the workshop.

2. The workshop context

There are several trends within and outside the African forestry sector that have direct and indirect impacts on the present and future status and use of forests and trees. For the purpose of this concept note only a few trends will be highlighted in order to guide discussions on them.

Within the forest sector some of the notable trends include:

2.1 Deforestation and forest degradation

Nearly all issues in the forestry sector revolve, directly or indirectly, around deforestation and forest degradation; and these define practically all activities of and interventions to the sector. It is through these two processes that forest resources are made available for human use. These processes supply forest products, create employment, support livelihoods, contribute to national incomes and support other sectors; among other benefits. Paradoxically, it is through the same processes, when not managed properly, that forest resources, including land on which forests thrive, are either overexploited or destroyed. This could lead to problems such as impairment of the capacity to support the supply of ecosystem services like climate amelioration and regulation of water supplies; scarcity of forest products that could constrain livelihood support, national incomes and developments in other sectors and economy; and adverse effects on other forest roles such as erosion of aesthetic values like ecotourism, and decline in capacity for soil protection, and as windbreaks.

While the forest resources serve practically all people, animals and plants on the continent, it is mainly people that destroy and degrade these resources, with the main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Africa being farmers at both small holder and large scale (intensive) levels, and including livestock husbandry.

2.2 Commercial tree production by smallholders

Commercial tree production is now not exclusively reliant on big plantations in many countries but is increasingly being carried out by smallholder farmers, either individually or as communities, groups or associations of farmers. This trend comes with several challenges, including how to strengthen individual farmers as groups or in associations so that their voice can be heard, especially in soliciting credit for investment, value adding, markets for their produce, and lobbying for favourable policies. Added to this is the problem of quality supply of germplasm, as well as economic harvesting and processing of trees from individual farms where trees are interspersed with agricultural crops, livestock enclosures and dwelling structures.

2.3 Managing forests in relation to climate change

On the international policy and development scene, a very strong trend in the last decade has been increasingly and singularly with respect to forests and their management in relation to climate change, and the ongoing discussions on this issue. This is also of great relevance to Africa. In this regard it is increasingly becoming apparent in many countries that forest-related development and economic undertakings, new policies, research and education programmes, conservation efforts, etc., tend to be conceived with some justification on how they take into account climate change mitigation and adaptation. While this may be positive in that this puts a new focus on forests, and attracts previously unheard of amounts of funds for “forest-climate” initiatives, it also has drawbacks. The most problematic one is that this focus on climate change takes attention away from the enormously important current and potential roles of sustainably managed forests and trees as drivers of economic development and poverty alleviation or, from the much more immediately important needs of conserving forests for biodiversity protection and hydrology enhancement. However, there are many positive signs today that funders of various REDD+, carbon credit and climate mitigation programmes realise that without putting economic

and “conventional” conservation effects in the foreground, it will not be realistic to achieve major positive impacts on climate through “forest-climate” programmes. To this end, there is increasing recognition that REDD+ can bring climate benefits not only through adaptation and mitigation activities but also beyond carbon. So, in designing and implementing REDD+ strategies, this dual character of benefits needs to be taken into account so that non-carbon benefits are also incentivized.

2.4 Rehabilitation of degraded lands using trees

There are recognized traditional forest management practices and technologies that have the potential to promote rehabilitation and/or restoration of degraded forests and woodlands provided proper policies and institutional frameworks are in place. Some of the approaches used in natural regeneration include complete coppice; coppice with standards and selective cutting; pollarding, pruning and lopping; all found to be the predominant form of restoration in dry forests and woodlands of southern Africa. Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration is also common in some countries like Niger where over 5 million hectares are reported to have been regenerated in the 1990s. Enclosures are prevalent in livestock farming areas where they are used to encourage rehabilitation of grazing land, for example in the Tigray in Ethiopia. Artificial regeneration through woodlots or farm forest is prioritized for out-growers in Uganda, energy production in Rwanda and reforestation of bare hills in Ethiopia. Opportunities also exist for promoting forest restoration through tree planting for carbon markets in rural communities in the form of community-based REDD+ initiatives for sustainable forest management. Agroforestry is also recognized as an important avenue for rehabilitation of degraded areas, especially to improve soil fertility and soil conservation, and also in enhancing ecosystems services.

Natural regeneration through active involvement of local communities supported by enabling policies such as clear forest, tree and land tenure is the most successful and promising option for restoration of the large areas of degraded land. However, while policies promoting participatory natural resource management are in place in most African countries, implementation of these regeneration activities have mostly taken a pilot project based approach with few strategies for up scaling by the governments. In addition, enabling policies for community based approaches, including clear cut land tenure and equitable benefit sharing, are still very much wanting in some countries.

Some important trends that are outside the forest sector or interphase with the sector include:

2.5 Rapid economic development and urbanisation

A more positive *trend that is emerging in Africa is rapid economic development in many African countries* – there was an average annual growth rate in GDP of 4.8% in the 2001-2010 decade, and the trend continues – Sub-Saharan Africa is predicted to have a growth of 5.2% in 2014. Following this, is a quick growth in middle income groups (in 2011, 60 million African households earned at least USD 3000) and in urbanization (about 40% of the population lives in urban areas), which have resulted in a very significant rise in demand for wood- and fibre-based products, from charcoal, via construction wood, paper products and standard furniture and interior design features (flooring, doors, window frames, etc.), to more luxury items such as exclusive furniture. A large part of these increased needs are still imported but more and more investors, both local and international, see the potential in the forest sector in Africa. The globalisation of trade and markets, Africa’s strategic geographical position and its apparent potential

for exporting wood-based products (and not only logs as today) further underline this trend. The forestry sector appears not to be well positioned to take advantage of these economic developments.

2.6 Competition for land

The above economic trends lead to a more controversial trend affecting the future of forestry in Africa, which is increasing search for available land for expanding food, fibre and fuel production. Africa is a continent which certainly has vast expanses of land with sparse population and extensive current land use - e.g. the miombo woodlands of Southern Africa and the rain forest regions of Central Africa – also suitable for large scale production of food and energy crops and timber plantations. The “scramble” for such land, both by local and foreign investors, has exploded in the last 10-15 years. It has led to many conflicts and disagreements between investors, governments and local communities, and the characterisation of such investments as “land grabbing” is often heard. However, there are an increasing number of very good examples where investors, local communities, and local and national governments have come to very satisfactory arrangements with benefits to all concerned.

It is within this context that the African Forestry Forum in partnership with the is organizing this pre-XIV World Forestry Congress workshop to look more closely at, continental level, on the above trends, and more specifically on how they are manifesting and being handled in the continent.

3. The need for action

The workshop will examine these and other related issues with a view of enhancing the roles of forests and trees in:

- national economic development and poverty alleviation,
- improving food security and nutrition, and
- enhancing environmental stability and forest values.

In doing so the workshop will involve the following key stakeholders:

3.1 Rural people/local communities/small holder producers

They are at the core of local governance, provided they have secure tenure, access rights, responsibilities and resources. They are increasingly taking on responsibilities for forest and woodland management through devolved rights and responsibilities. Rural people use tree and timber products for many diverse reasons, and are increasingly entering the market for tree and timber products. Rural people are organizing themselves into, for example, associations and village committees, in order to take on their resources rights and responsibilities.

3.2 The private sector

This sector is especially important in harvesting of timber from natural forests as well as in establishment of forest plantations. The sector is also prominent in processing of timber, its marketing and trade. It is also important in the harvesting, processing and marketing of non-timber forest products. These attributes give the private sector a central role to play in the future of sustainable forest management and use in Africa. The private sector has also a key role in the governance and use of these resources and

establishing responsible relations with local people and communities. However, in many countries, the sector continues to be characterized by many uncoordinated small players, does not feature in national plans, lacks investment and a champion for its cause.

3.3 National governments

National governments handle forestry work through their forestry authorities/departments. These have important roles of oversight, policy and law formulation and implementation, and setting in place an enabling environment for sustainable forest management so that rural people/local communities and the private sector can invest in forests and trees and benefit from their products and services. National governments are also major owners of natural forest resources.

3.4 Research and academia

There are many unknowns that come with new and emerging issues in forestry like how to handle climate change in forestry, a better perception of the relationship between forests and water, forestry in green economy, implementing the SDGs in the context of forestry, to mention a few. These are some of the issues research will need to move fast in providing the necessary information for informed policy making as well as for implementing plans and programmes. Academicians are extremely important in moulding the future generation that will handle, in an appropriate manner, the changing landscape and demands on it. Short courses on these and other issues for those practicing forestry are also essential to re-tool them in new ways of thinking and acting so that they can meaningfully accommodate changing circumstances.

3.5 Non-governmental organizations-NGOs

The NGOs are emerging as key players in forestry; they fill some gaps left by national governments in Africa when they move away from doing forestry business to becoming custodians of policy and enforcers of forest laws and regulations. NGOs are also a very crucial link to local communities, who are also increasingly owning and managing these resources. They also feature very prominently in handling new issues in forestry, as can be seen in their visibility in facilitating and undertaking, with local communities, REDD+ activities and community based forest management. Unfortunately their effective coordination within the forestry sector, is in many countries not adequate, in addition to the required support (in terms of capacity and skills building and finances etc.) to deliver on their mandates.

4. Organization of the pre-XIV World Forestry Congress workshop

4.1 Overall objective

The overall objective of the workshop is to promote and sustain discussion of key issues related to the interaction between people, forest and tree resources, and the environment on the continent; with a view of coming up with ways through which forestry can be better profiled, and forests and trees are managed in better ways, and all these combine to improve livelihoods, national incomes and the environment.

The pre-XIV World Forestry Congress workshop is also expected to enhance meaningful African participation and contribution to the deliberations of the XIV World Forestry Congress.

More specifically the workshop will examine trends, on the continent, on four broad themes:

Theme 1: Rehabilitation of degraded lands using trees

Theme 2: Managing forests in the context of climate change

Theme 3: Forest governance, marketing and trade in forest products

Theme 4: Institutional organization for forestry at sub-regional and regional levels

4.2 Expected outputs

Outputs expected from the workshop are:

1. Better awareness of the status of forestry in the continent, and more specifically on important trends and main issues affecting African forest sector development.
2. A statement from the workshop to the XIV World Forestry Congress.
3. Proposals on how to move forward on identified key issues.

4.3 Pre-XIV World Forestry Congress Programme

The workshop will take place in 2 days as follows:

4 – 5 September 2015: Plenary session

Presentations to be made on the following themes:

Theme 1: Rehabilitation of degraded lands using trees

Theme 2: Managing forests in the context of climate change

Theme 3: Governance, marketing and trade in forest products

Theme 4: Institutional organization for forestry at sub-regional and regional levels

5 September, afternoon: Break-out session

There will be 3 groups to examine key issues that require action and proposals on how to address them.

The workshop will come up with a statement on the observations made during the workshop, and in the context of the main agenda for the XIV World Forestry Congress.

6 September: AFF members meeting

All AFF members present at the workshop will meet and guided by an agenda set for the meeting.

4.4 Call for papers

Interested individuals may wish to submit papers for presentation at the plenary sessions as well as posters on the above themes.

Deadline for submission of abstracts is June 15, 2015

Abstracts should be submitted to: m.larwanou@cgiar.org and y.yemshaw@cgiar.org

Acceptance notifications for abstracts and guidelines for writing the papers will be sent on June 30, 2015

5. Participants

The workshop will bring together African forest stakeholders from national governments, civil society organizations, academia and research, and representatives of different groups like youth and women.

There will be limited opportunities for sponsorship to the event; for this contact AFF through the contact details provided below.

6. Venue

The workshop will be held at the Durban International Convention Center, Durban, South Africa.

For more information, please contact:

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