

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP 3

Policy research and development for sustainable dryland management

Group members: [please fill from meeting records]

1. Background

Participants of a recent international workshop on dryland management in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), and experience from earlier initiatives have recognized that trees and forest resources, have significant potentials for contributing to poverty reduction strategies. Regrettably these resources have not been adequately tapped, and have been degraded in many areas in SSA. The following key priority policy research and development needs were identified:

- (a) The need for information and data to evaluate the impacts, beneficial or otherwise, of existing and emerging international agreements of relevance in sustainable management of drylands. For example, some specific needed types of information:**

Types of information needed:

Extent of participation (ratification and degree of participation including translation of such resolution into national strategies and plans and their implementation)

- Emerging initiatives, and extent of realization of goals on rehabilitation of degraded drylands including implementation of sustainable resources management programmes
- Resource allocation from national and international sources
- Specific impact assessment reports on particular initiatives or interventions
- Instances of conflicts between the conventions and national and regional development.
- Impact of land use policies on resources management, emerging R&D agendas and their performance

- **Sources of Information:**
 - National governments reports and evaluations of activities and performance under the CCD, CBD, CITES and other processes,
 - COPs summaries and updates,
 - Relevant pilot activities or reports,
 - Reports of preparatory task forces,
 - Relevant FAO reports and updates,

- Reports and newsletters of regional economic organizations and R&D initiatives (IGAD, SADC, ECOWAS and relevant initiatives in the continent such as the desert forest margins programmes) and sub-regional networks e.g. CILLS, CORAF, ASARECA, FARA, FORNESSA, etc.

(b) The need to strengthen and to consolidate the position of SSA countries in leveraging international agreements and influence their implementation to benefit dryland management.

- It is noted that the COPs are the most appropriate fora where countries can lobby for change on agreements. But hitherto participation of SSA countries has been totally inadequate.
- SSA countries should network (e.g. under the sub- and regional groupings and networks) to develop common stands for a more effective and transparent influence.
- This should in turn receive support from the international community to promote meaningful participation by the SSA countries.
- SSA countries should take proactive action to assess impacts of the convention within national development contexts, under the support of international cooperation.
- Results of such assessments should be evaluated at national and regional levels to confirm relevance of agreements, and /or to provide a basis for articulating change or modification.
- SSA countries should continually mainstream international conventions, protocols and agreements etc in their continued process of policy and legislation development. This should in turn provide an expanded base for developing subsequent strategic plans and programmes.

2. There is a need for SSA countries to ensure that relevant national and international policies are of greater relevance, and are supportive to their broader concerns with sustainable development strategies, and specifically ensuring:

- Equity between countries
- Free flow of information, knowledge and know how
- Necessary training at all levels

3. Opportunities for facilitating Inter-Country Equity

- Network development by SSA countries to provide platforms for developing common stands for leveraging influence on decisions at CoPs on equity.
- International policies should have built in mechanisms to promote active participation of grass root communities with channels that foster flow of benefits and transparent funding instruments.

- SSA countries institutionalise decentralization of forest management to grass root community based organizations with clear roles and responsibility in resource management.
- Access to information, unimpeded knowledge and technology flow needs to be assured
- SSA countries develop and implement prudent policy guidelines to facilitate accurate documentation of information, its storage and dissemination, horizontally and vertically within and between agencies and countries.
- Where it is necessary, project interventions should have built-in funds for acquiring information from private agencies and other sources.

4. Training in policy development

- Training in policy development and implementation should be undertaken at all levels.
- This should include continuing dialogue between the scientists and policy leaders (politicians, planners and administrators) and to include short-term courses, attachments and studies leading to higher diplomas and degrees.
- SSA country institutions should provide positions and train competent personnel to feature the role of research in national development with a view to promoting equitable flow of resources for forestry research and participation of national scientists in international policy processes.

5. The Context

- With the on-going economic structural adjustment, forest sectors of countries of the region have been increasingly marginalized in the last decade, and forestry institutions significantly weakened. However available knowledge and experience reveal that forests and tree resources in dryland SSA contribute much to rural and urban livelihood development. This is in sharp contrast to current low levels of investment in the development and sustainable management of these resources. In most countries, government-funded forest departments stand moribund in the face of intended (but not fully specified) restructuring: and the investment climate is not conducive to sustainable management of dryland resources. Consequently policy research and development is urgently needed to better guide the on-going policy and institutional reforms.
- In this regard, it is also noted that many of the countries of the region developed “Forestry Master Plans” during 1990s, with support from various donors. Although these are now outdated, they should provide much substance to be built upon. Useful lessons can be drawn from these and related initiatives such as that of the African Academy of Science’s programme on capacity building in national forest programmes project. This project, which was supported by the EC, focused on regional training-of-trainers workshops for 16 African countries. The project was implemented between 1998 and 2002. In East Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania participated and benefited from

the project. Other notable initiatives undertaken in the region include: the FAO's NFP facility which supports a number of countries in developing and implementing their national forest programmes, often based on forestry master plans: The forestry research network for SSA (FORNESSA) which has facilitated sub-regional research priority setting and information exchange through the global forest information system (GFIS) and other means; the African Forest Research Network (AFORNET) that promotes research and development through support to individual scientists; the African Network for Agroforestry Education (ANAFE) and CIFOR's programmes on Miombo woodlands and drylands.

- One of the important lessons learned from previous efforts, is that the development of appropriate policy and institutional reforms often calls for high-level political advocacy and sharing of experiences among countries. It is in this regard that the revitalized AMCEN could play important direct supporting and facilitating role, given its high political profile. For SSA countries, it is specifically proposed that the policy task force operates through the African Ministerial Committee on Environment (AMCEN) to achieve greater impact. The task force could be supported and facilitated by the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

(a) Recommended Actions on Policy Research and Development Programmes

6. Recognizing the above identified priority needs to be addressed in dryland management and the need to address these through multi-sectoral approaches such as national groups bringing different actors together (national agencies, relevant NGOs, research, private sector and the civil society); the following urgently required policy interventions, by SSA countries with the support of international and regional bodies were identified:
 - Mobilization of a policy level advocacy task force to sensitise, promote and to support policy reactions and participation, among SSA countries, particularly in connection with CCD, CBD, UNFCCC, CITES and the UNCED/IPF/IFF/UNFF process. Lead actors: FORNESSA, AFORNET, and NEPAD in collaboration with relevant European and international partners such as the EU, EFRN and FAO. Collaborating institutions will include: regional economic organizations and forestry research networks; and at the national level, focal points for the forest programmes and international conventions. The latter are recommended to operate through national dialogue called by national environmental coordinating authorities.
 - Formulation and implementation of policy and institutional reforms for well functioning forest sectors in line with the Forest Principles and the new paradigm on sustainable forest management established at the Rio Earth Summit and the millennium development goals. Lead agencies: national focal points, regional economic and development

programmes; supported by relevant international agencies/partners e.g. EU, FAO, EFRN, etc. Collaborating agencies: NGOs, the civil society, the private sector, etc.

- Acquisition, through research and feasibility studies, of accurate information and data on forest resource status and functioning to inform practical interventions in the international policy arena, particularly in line with CCD, CBD, UNFCCC, CITES and the UNCED/IPF/IFF/UNFF process. These research activities should be implemented in continuous dialogue with those using research results to inform their inputs in the international policy debate. Lead agencies: FAO, national forest service in collaboration with regional economic organizations and research institutions. Collaborating agencies: Research institutions at all levels.
- Forging partnerships with relevant players at national, regional, and international levels (government, NGOs, private sector) for synergies, harmonization of efforts and initiatives in dryland forest R&D. At the national level this would require an integrated sustainable management approach at the landscape level. Lead agencies: National forest agencies in collaboration with relevant sub-regional economic and development programmes such as CILLSS and desert margins programme.