

**NATIONAL REPORT TO THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
FORUM ON FORESTS**

MALAWI

31ST OCTOBER, 2004

1. KEY CONTACTS

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2. PROGRESS AND ISSUES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IPF/IFF PROPOSALS FOR ACTION.

General.

1. Additional Information on Initiatives taken and lessons learned since 1997.

- ❖ **Approval of the National Forestry Programme:** In 2001 the Government of Malawi approved and launched the National Forestry Programme with the view that it should provide the much needed mechanism to operationalise the National Forestry policy and Forest Act that had been approved in 1996 and 1997, respectively.
- ❖ **Incorporation of IPF/IFF Proposals:** The National Forestry Programme was developed in the backdrop of the various proposals and decisions that were being made by the IPF/IFF. In this manner some specific actions relating to combating deforestation and forest degradation especially in the area of capacity building, raising awareness and matters of finance were considered as priorities in the national Forestry Programme.
- ❖ **Combating Deforestation in a Multi-Sectoral framework:** Within the framework of the national Forestry Programme preparation process, the Ministry of Natural resources and environmental Affairs constituted a multi-sectoral task force to consider issues of deforestation and other forms of environmental degradation. Which had commenced to consider deforestation from various multi-sectoral angles and developed some interventions that would aim at addressing such issues.
- ❖ **Involvement of Traditional Leaders:** With the support of the National Forestry programme facility a process was initiated to intensively involve traditional leaders and other stakeholders in critically addressing issues of deforestation and environmental degradation. This process is still underway.
- ❖ **Participatory Forest Management Model:** Participatory Forest Management planning process was developed in 2001 with a view build the capacity of field forestry extension staff and communities in order to facilitate a process of measurement and analysis in a manner that is appropriate to community needs, capacity, their objectives and forest resources that are available in their respective areas. This model will be adopted for wider use and application in the country in future.
- ❖ **Decentralisation of Forestry Responsibilities to District Assemblies:** In March, 2004 the department of Forestry devolved some of its key responsibilities to District Assemblies in response to Government decision regarding the devolution of selected responsibilities by Central Government. This aspect is also covered in the National Forestry programme as a major process that has to be implemented in order to advance the sustainable forest management at local levels.
- ❖ **Multi-sectoral Involvement in the national level UNCCD programme framework:** Further multi-sectoral consultations were during the period initiated in the framework of the national level efforts to implement actions under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification : stakeholders both from within and outside Government have consulted widely to draw up proposals and initiatives that are expected to raise

awareness and result in actions to address desertification issues in the country.

- ❖ **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan:** Related to the above are the intensive consultations pertaining to the development of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan that contains elements covering the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity resources. The NBSAP for Malawi has recently been approved and its development involved a wide range of stakeholders both within and outside Government.
- ❖ **Malawi National Strategy for Sustainable Development:** In 2004 Malawi prepared a national strategy for Sustainable Development as a response to the WSSD Action Plan; the strategies in this include forestry in relation to the IPF/IFF.
- ❖ **Participation in the National Process pertaining to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change:** Last but not least, the Malawi continues to consider issues of climate change under the auspices of the department of Environmental Affairs, taking into account the recommendations and proposals from the international process of the UN framework Convention on Climate Change.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF2

Combating deforestation and forest degradation

2.Limited work was undertaken on the subject of diagnostic studies to analyse historical and underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation.

3.Malawi prepared its National Forestry policy in 1997 which is currently being used. Many recent developments , however, warrant a review of this policy and work has been initiated to review the 1996 Forestry policy so that it can better address the underlying causes of deforestation.

4.A wide range of programmes and activities are being undertaken in order to raise awareness of the challenge of deforestation in the country through publicity, and various other public for a. Additional public awareness activities are being undertaken in the framework of related policy and strategy frameworks such as the Biodiversity Strategy and Action plan for Malawi; the national processes related to the implementation of the UNCCD and the UNFCCC. Resource constraints, however, have tended to hamper this work.

Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems

5.Malawi has 90 gazetted forest reserves covering an estimated 1,000,000 ha. This represents a 20% increase in the extent of land designated as forest reserves over the past five year period. National Parks and game reserves have remained static at 968,000ha. While the area under forest reserve status has increased, challenges to effectively manage these reserves have also increased:

encroachments, illegal exploitation of forest resources continue to escalate especially in the densely populated parts of the country where land holdings are small, i.e. less than 1 ha per family. The challenge therefore is to identify innovative ways of sustainably managing these areas while at the same time meeting the growing wood needs of the adjacent populations.

6. Forest policy strategies relating to the development of partnerships in the management of forest reserves and industrial plantations were implemented in a number of cases: Government-NGO partnerships; Government-local community; and Government-private sector collaboration. Valuable lessons have emerged that may be applicable to other forest reserves and forest plantations. This work requires to be expanded and refined by considering local situations and demands. Resource constraints in terms of finances and staff capacity will prove limiting to expand these initiatives to other areas in the immediate term.

7. Government has recognised the linkages between sustainable development and rehabilitation and sustainable management of forests and trees in environmentally critical areas. In 2004 the National tree Planting Week was broadened in scope to be the National Forestry Week whereby all stakeholders were encouraged to take action to rehabilitate degraded forests and areas through tree planting and proper forest management practices. In June the National Strategy for Sustainable Development deliberately included forestry as one area for intervention as a follow up on the WSSD. Population levels in the country, however, warrant that more innovative ways are urgently identified in order to balance the day to day needs for food and energy with the requirements to sustainably manage forested areas.

Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover.

8. Not applicable to Malawi.

9. Not applicable to Malawi.

10. Not applicable to Malawi.

Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and promotion of natural and planted forests.

11. Creation of new forest resources: the key strategy adopted for the creation of new forest resources include (i) the distribution and sale of tree seed to village level communities, schools and associations; the private forest industry; and individual; and (ii) the Department of Forestry, largely through reforestation on Government owned lands (iii) District Assemblies have lately been mandated through the Decentralisation Act to establish and manage their own plantations as well – in this area some District Assemblies will be building on some forest plantations that were transferred over to them by the Department of Forestry in the late 1980's; and (iv) agricultural estates are also being encouraged to undertake reforestation in order to meet their future wood needs on site. The rate of reforestation, however, is still low relative to forest resource use and depletion;

there is, therefore, need to step reforestation efforts. Such efforts are constrained by resource availability.

12. The key policy strategy adopted by the Government of Malawi to meet the increasing demand for wood and non-wood forest products include: (i) secure the support of various NGO's to complement its efforts of involving the grass-roots communities in the sustainable management of forest resources; (ii) enlist the support of other sectors, e.g. water, energy, agriculture, to incorporate forest related interventions in their programmes; and (iii) support private sector participation in forest resource creation.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF3

Economic aspects of forests, including trade

13. Malawi has not undertaken much work in the area of valuation of forest goods and services largely because of capacity constraints.

14. In similar manner limited work has been undertaken in the area of collecting storage and distribution of market data and information for wood and non-wood forest products.

15. On the other hand progress has been made over the past two years to broaden and improve the forest revenue collection system by including services from forests, e.g. water extraction by water boards, commercial collection of non-wood forest products, hydro electricity generation, ranching, etc.

16. Efforts to reduce negative impacts of trade: no work has been done on this aspect due to capacity and resource constraints.

17. Forest certification: no work has been done on this initiative. Preliminary efforts have started, however, in order to develop a certification programme for Malawi.

18. Efforts to reduce illegal trade: the main tool applied in this area is the issuing of export licences for all wood exports, especially for individuals using known border exit points. The system is in its formative stages and requires refining and strengthening in order to capture all wood exports, including some non-wood forest products exports. The challenge, however, is that the country has extensive borders which cannot be adequately manned or monitored to regulate cross-border trade in forest products.

Forest health and productivity.

19. Air pollution has posed no or little threat to Malawi forests and, therefore, nothing to report.

Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs.

20. Various policy frameworks and strategies have recently been developed in the country in order to address the full range of forest values; the main ones are:

- ❖ The National Forestry Programme (2001)
- ❖ National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), (2004).
- ❖ UNCCD Country Reports (3) and Action Plans.
- ❖ Malawi National Strategy for Sustainable Development
- ❖ Environmental Policy and Act.

21. There are limited efforts to assess long-term trends in national supply and demand for wood, non-wood forest products and services. While the National Forestry Programme recognises the need to undertake such studies through specific actions the Department has yet to undertake such actions especially once resources for this have been identified. One way being considered at present is to develop projects that would assist in generating the needed information.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for Action related to thematic issues of UNFF 4.

Social and cultural aspects of forests

22. Not much work has been carried out on the aspects of equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of forest genetic resources. The need for this has, however, been well addressed in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan that has considered this item as a priority action. At a regional level, Malawi is participating in a regional programme which has identified two priority thematic areas that includes equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of forest genetic resources. Further to this the NBSAP has also strongly featured the aspects of intellectual property rights under the thematic areas of the CBD.

23. Role of women: The National Forestry Policy and the National Forestry Programme have adequately provided the basic guidance and foundation relating to the role of women in forest management. At implementational levels progress continues to be made to involve women in forest management. Similarly, the Department of Forestry has made deliberate moves to position women in decision making positions in District Forestry Offices, Regional Forestry Offices as well as Forestry Training institutions and Forestry Department Headquarters. Trainee recruitment procedures have also deliberately opened up to allow for women trainees as a basis for future advancement of women in forest management. More substantively advances have also been made to streamline gender aspects in all forestry programmes in the Department of Forestry. The issue of women in forest management is, however, a continuous one that requires to be addressed in the country's education system.

24. Intergrating local and indigenous communities in sustainable forest management: Malawi, through the Forest Act (1997), has legally incorporated local communities as key players in sustainable forest management. This is expected to be done through village natural resources management committees (VNRMC's); through this arrangement local communities are expected to be legally empowered to undertake a whole range of activities that would lead to sustainable forest management. At the same time the VNRMC's are expected to provide a "landing point" for technology transfer relating to sustainable forest management.

The major challenge that exists in this matter, however, relates to the large number of VNRMC's that have been formed and can potentially be formed, vis-a vis the low capacity of Government and NGO's extension services to support their effective participation in sustainable forest management activities.

Traditional forest-related knowledge

25. Some work has been carried out relating to this subject by the National Herbarium and Botanical Gardens of Malawi covering the area of traditional medicines. The Forestry Research Institute of Malawi is also participating in a regional initiative relating to bark harvesting for plant-based medicines. The Herbalist Association of Malawi initiated a planting programme relating to regeneration of selected plants and shrubs with medicinal values.

It is, however, considered that there is still a lot of traditional forest-related knowledge that has not yet been captured but that has potential to contribute towards the goal of improving the health of many people at national and international levels.

26. In spite of the above, not much work has been undertaken to ensure that the application of intellectual property rights for traditional forest-related knowledge is extended to the holders of such knowledge. The result is continuous collection of such information without benefits accruing to the owners. The country requires to do more work on this aspect.

Scientific forest-related knowledge

27. The Forestry Research Institute of Malawi has generated a significant volume of new information relating to scientific information on forestry and related aspects. This has been disseminated to various users and practitioners. There is, however, still more information that requires to be analysed, synthesised and disseminated to users.

In this regard the Forestry research Institute of Malawi (FRIM) requires to be strengthened in its capacity to mobilise additional resources so that it can better undertake its mandate in forestry research. On the other hand the Forestry Research Institute of Malawi has made good progress in

networking at regional and international levels – this needs to be maintained and expanded.

28. Interaction between scientific research and policy processes has improved over the past five years or so through:

- development of the National Forestry Research Strategy under the auspices of the National Forestry Research Committee which is chaired by the Director of Forestry and membership is drawn from a wide range of stakeholders from Government and Non-Government agencies.
- participation of scientists from the Forestry Research Institute of Malawi in high-level policy forums; e.g. during the development of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.
- close linkages that have emerged and have been maintained with local Universities, other research institutions, processes and studies.

Monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions.

29. Information on forest resources in Malawi is generally outdated, being based on the land map drawn up in 1992. Forest plantation resource/stock maps are also old and require updating.

In the above connection, the Department of Forestry continues to look for financial and technical assistance in order to update the available information. The FAO are being approached in this regard with a view to participate in the AFRICOVER land cover mapping for SADC in order to improve forest resource information availability for the country.

Criteria and indicators for Sustainable Forest Management.

30. Malawi has participated continuously in the regional/sub-regional processes relating to criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Notable in this regard is the FAO/UNEP C and I for SFM (the Africa Dry Zone process). It has also made an initial step to draw up Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management for Malawi: this was developed in June, 2004, through a consultative process internally within the Department of Forestry and is in a draft form. It is intended to revisit and review this first draft and discuss it at a wider stakeholder group before adopting it for use.

The Malawi C & I for SFM is expected to assist in establishing a basis for setting goals for the participation of District Assemblies in their discharge of decentralised forestry responsibilities in future.

III Preparation of the Report

31. This report has been drawn up internally by the Focal Point. It has benefited from consultations within the Department of Forestry. Its strength,

however, lies on the consideration that most of the accomplishments that may have been attained in the sector and reported herein have benefited through wider stakeholder consultations and participation: this is particularly the case with the documents that are listed below.

- a. National Forestry Programme (NFP) (2001)
- b. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2004)
- c. Guidelines for Sustainable Funding Mechanism for Central District and Community level Action in Environment and Natural Resource Management. (March, 2004)
- d. Malawi National Strategy for Sustainable Development (June, 2004).
- e. Draft C and I for SFM/Malawi
- f. UNCCD National Reports (2004, 2003 and 2002)
- g. Department of Forestry Annual report, 2002/3.