Kenya’s views related to UNFF-CBD collaboration  
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UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTRY.

KENYA’S FOREST DEPARTMENT

KENYA’S VIEWS ON FOREST MANAGEMENT TO THE UNFF

Attached find Kenya’s Forest Department views on ecosystem approach concept and the concept of sustainable forest management and on the management, sustainable use and benefit sharing of forest biological diversity for the UNFF secretariat.

1. CONCEPT ON ECOSYSTEM APPROACH:

Currently and in the past, forest management in Kenya has been done along administrative boundaries. This has limitations as a contiguous forest is often managed by different persons or bodies or organisations according to some arbitrary administrative boundaries. This has led to different tree tenure and forest management situations such as having forests under state ownership, forests under local government ownership, those under private farms and those under communal ownership especially forests in the arid and semi arid areas, all with different forest management systems.

This wide range of tenurial situation has an impact on the management of the resources. While legally most of the natural forests and plantations especially in the high potential areas are under government ownership, a variety of factors have undermined the capacity of the department in managing the resource sustainably. Encroachments into forest areas, excisions for farming and settlement purposes, and illegal logging have undermined the productive and protective functions of forests under government control. A similar situation exists in the communally owned forests in the arid and semi arid zones. Over the years, the ability of the communities to manage the resources has declined and the large scale expansion of livestock population and increase in charcoal production have led to significant degradation of the resources.

This state of affairs has led to the development of an ecosystem approach of management of the forest resources in the country such that an ecosystem will be looked at and managed as a whole. There are several important ecosystems in the country such as:

- Coastal ecosystem with the mangrove forests and all coastal forests
- Mount Kenya ecosystem which includes the high forests in the centre of the country
• Mt Elgon ecosystem
• The Mau Complex ecosystem
• Kakamega forest ecosystem
• Dry land forest ecosystem.

This management concept envisages a situation where the whole ecosystem is managed as one unit, and this management involves wide consultation and participation of all stakeholders in the management of the resource. A central component of this management is participatory forest management with the local communities who must also share the benefits from the forest resources that they help to manage. This ecosystem approach is the way forward in the management of forest resources and the department is currently piloting it in several ecosystems with a view to duplicating it all over the country.

2. SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT.

The Forest Department in Kenya has in the recent past developed criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. To implement these there will be need to have wide level consultation and involvement of all stakeholders.

The criteria for sustainable forest management developed for Kenya include:-
• Maintenance and improvement of forest resources.
• Conservation and enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems
• Maintenance of forest ecosystem health, vitality and integrity
• Maintenance and enhancement of production functions of forests and other wooded lands
• Maintenance and enhancement of protection functions in forest management
• Maintenance and enhancement of social-economic benefits.
• Adequacy of legal, institutional and policy framework for Sustainable Forest Management.

Currently the Forest Department headed by the Chief Conservator of Forests is the key institution responsible for forest management in the country. It is responsible for the conservation and management of all government forests besides providing technical support to all other players, especially farmers, local communities and the private sector. Currently the department’s operations are decentralised to the district and provincial level where the operational units are forest stations for protective and productive forest areas while for forestry extension the operational units are called divisions. Issues related to granting of licenses, gazettement of forest areas and other forest issues are deliberated at the district and provincial level before ratification. The wide level of participation through consultation will ensure that decisions made on forest management have a wide public acceptance to ensure sustainable forest management.

The government has embraced the concept of participatory forest management and forest adjacent communities are being sensitised on sustainable forest management and how the forest resource can be used to uplift their livelihoods.

3. MANAGEMENT, SUSTAINABLE USE AND BENEFIT SHARING OF FOREST BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY:
Kenya has a relatively low forest cover. Closed canopy forest covers about 1.24 million ha. Plantations cover 0.16 million ha. The total forest area is less than 3 per cent of the total land area in Kenya. Most of the indigenous forests occur in high potential areas where they are under severe pressure and competition from other forms of land use. They continue to be degraded, but if proper management and control could be installed, they could become the so-called modified (near-natural) or post extraction and abandoned secondary forests. This degradation considerably undermines the prospects for long-term economic growth and socio-political stability of the country.

The Forest Department started with aggressive management and conservation of all public (gazetted) forests to counteract the negative impacts on forest degradation and to assist in the recovery of the forests (development of secondary forest). Its functions include, *inter alia*, the implementation of appropriate management practices on forest ecosystems and their associated resources to guarantee sustainable supply of forest-based products, while enhancing the ecological functions of the forests. The Department (Government) prepared a Forestry Master Plan in 1994 (KFMP, 1994) to meet these challenges and to guide forestry development in Kenya for the next 25 years (up to 2020). This plan has programmes that address critical institutional, production and environmental protection issues in the forestry sector. The broad objectives of these programmes are to address the threats to the indigenous forests which form the bulk of modified or secondary forests.

As a follow up to the Master Plan and in line with its recommendations, the Forest Department initiated a series of major reforms in the sector:

- A new Forest Policy, prepared and adopted by the government
- The Forest Legislation (Forest Bill 2002), redrafted after government approval, is awaiting parliamentary debate and enactment into law.
- The Forest Department headquarters was restructured as part of a civil service reform programme aimed at increasing efficiency and productivity.
- Industrial forest management options were explored and the best managers identified.
- Farm Forestry was identified to potentially take over a substantial part of the functions of indigenous forests and the development of large-scale plantations.
- Kenya’s forest certification process was initiated with the Kenya Forestry Working Group appointed as the country’s focal point.

There is great pressure on the forests for their potentially arable land. A continuous feedback and harmonisation of related policies is vital. Effective management of forests for sustainable economic growth is also dependent on other land use policies, particularly those concerning the environment, agriculture, water resources and energy.

Under indigenous forests several issues are considered in relation to the development of secondary or modified forests:
• Indigenous forest protection: Although Kenya has some of the most diverse forest ecosystems (some qualify to be called primary unmodified or virgin forests), the forest biological diversity is still not properly protected. A lot still needs to be done to stop degradation, especially in forest land, national reserves and trust land forests.

• Rehabilitation of degraded areas: These areas form the bulk of secondary forests enrichment planting (as a way of rehabilitation) seems to be the appropriate way forward.

The level of utilisation of forest resources has a direct impact on the rate of modifying the indigenous forests, or of ecological succession. All illegal consumptive use such as logging, grazing, poaching and encroachment should be stopped through integration of communities adjacent to forests in planning, management and benefit sharing of forest resources. Because of the many problems faced in the management of indigenous forests, farm forestry seems to be the only way forward to meet the future wood demands in Kenya. It is only the farmers who can help close the foreseeable gap between supply and demand of wood and other forest products. It is anticipated that farms and settlement will contribute between 77-80 per cent of the total projected wood production in high potential and medium potential area between 2002 and 2020(KFMP 1994).