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Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
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## AFRICAN FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

### SIXTEENTH SESSION

**KHARTOUM, REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN**

**18-21 February 2008**

### SHARING LESSONS FROM FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE INITIATIVES IN AFRICA

## INTRODUCTION

1. During the past two years, regional and sub-regional organizations and networks have undertaken a number of forestry activities in Africa. Some of these initiatives have been quite successful, some have not yet met expectations, and some still rely heavily on support from development partners. This note highlights some of the current activities and proposes points for discussion for making regional and sub-regional cooperation more effective.
2. The 16<sup>th</sup> AFWC Session in Khartoum will provide a venue for regional and sub-regional organizations to share information and lessons learned about their recent activities.

## SELECTED REGIONAL INITIATIVES

3. Forestry is integrated in the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) of the **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) of the African Union (AU)**. This is done under the Pillar of Extending the area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems. As with many other initiatives, NEPAD is also focusing its support on sustainable land management and climate change. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)-NEPAD Working Group on Climate, Agriculture, Forestry and Land Use had its inaugural meeting in Addis Ababa in September 2007. The operational framework and functional modalities of the Working Group are being developed. In June 2007, Ministers from Sierra Leone, South Africa and the United Kingdom jointly launched a key programme that aims to ensure the widespread application of the best agricultural, forestry and natural research across Africa. ([www.nepad.org](http://www.nepad.org)).

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Most FAO meeting documents are available on Internet at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

4. The **African Forest Forum (AFF)** is an association of individuals who share the quest for advancing sustainable management of forest and tree resources of Africa. It grew out of the joint effort of the African Academy of Science (AAS) and the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) project in Africa. AFF also strives to contribute to the preparation of the African region in international fora such as the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).

5. The **Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa (FORNESSA)** is a network of national forest research institutions. It is federating three sub-regional forestry research networks in East Africa, West and Central Africa and in Southern Africa. FORNESSA has the potential to mobilize regional research cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa, but it needs support. ([www.fornessa.org](http://www.fornessa.org)).

6. The **African Forestry Research Network (AFORNET)** operates under the **African Academy of Sciences (AAS - [www.aasciences.org](http://www.aasciences.org))**, with financial support from Sweden. AFORNET is a network of individual scientists, who have benefited from AAS scholarships for higher education of African scientists, and continues its operations steadily. ([www.afornet.org](http://www.afornet.org)).

## SELECTED SUB-REGIONAL INITIATIVES

7. The **Central Africa Forests Commission (COMIFAC)** is a strategic platform for the conservation and sustainable management of forest and savannah ecosystems in Central Africa. Its Action Plan (2007 – 2008) focuses on the implementation and monitoring of its Convergence Plan; communication, dialogue, and coordination. The main activities carried out in 2007 include:

- monitoring of the impact of the Convergence Plan
- development of the sustainable funding strategy and mechanism
- strengthening the Executive Secretariat and national focal points
- improving governance in the forest sector and reducing illegal logging through the support provided to the FLEGT initiative, AFLEG process, FORCOMS (Forest Concession Monitoring System in Central Africa) and the development of a sub-regional convention (*Convention Sous-régionale sur le contrôle forestier*)
- development of a sub-regional action plan on “combating desertification and promoting sustainable land management” with the support of the Global Mechanism of the desertification convention (UNCCD). ([www.biodiv.be/comifac2](http://www.biodiv.be/comifac2)).

8. The **African Development Bank** has scheduled an International Conference on Financing Mechanisms for the Sustainable Management of the Congo Basin Forest Ecosystems, in Tunis, Tunisia on 21-22 February 2008. One of the main objectives will be institutional support to the Executive Secretariat of COMIFAC.

9. The Tunis conference will build upon the discussions held during the **Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP)** meeting, which was held in close collaboration with COMIFAC in October 2007 in Paris. The meeting reviewed the achievements made in CBFP under the facilitation of France and will plan for the next facilitation period by Germany.

10. A plan of action for the **Green Wall Initiative** is being prepared under the auspices of the AU. It aims to implement a set of integrated interventions addressing multi-sectoral issues that affect the lives of the people in the Sahel and Sahara regions.

11. A Sustainable Forest Management project of the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** has covered the transborder Oncho-Freed zone of Burkina-Faso and Ghana. Other countries such as Benin, Togo and Cote d’Ivoire have expressed interest in participating in the second phase of the project. A Forestry Policy Framework for West Africa was validated by ECOWAS in August 2006. ([www.ecowas.int](http://www.ecowas.int)).

12. The **Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)** has prepared a portfolio of projects in forestry, environment, wildlife and natural resources. Two major SADC programmes on wildlife are the Regional Wetland Conservation Project and the Development of Transfrontier

Conservation Areas. Two projects on cross-boundary forest fire management and invasive and alien species were recently submitted to international cooperation partners and donors.

13. The March 2007 meeting of the SADC Technical Committee on Forestry (Livingstone, Zambia) discussed the development of the SADC regional forestry strategy and outlined a common SADC view on UNFF7.

14. The 2002 SADC Forestry Protocol has been ratified by only five of the thirteen member states (Tanzania, Mauritius, South Africa and Lesotho and Zambia) so it is not yet operational. ([www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int)).

## LESSONS LEARNED AND THE WAY FORWARD

15. AFWC delegates may wish to consider the following points to stimulate discussion on increasing the effectiveness of regional and sub-regional cooperation, including ways to avoid duplication and make the initiatives less dependent on external, short-term project support:

- Projects under the regional and sub-regional initiatives are often short-lived by their very nature, and therefore are not the best medium for funding structural changes in institutional development. Sustainable ways of strengthening forest and wildlife initiatives and institutions need to be identified;
- sub-regional economic organizations are viable platforms for policy harmonization, but they need sustained technical and financial support, including from the national forestry and wildlife institutions in their member countries;
- national governments, regional and sub-regional organizations and development partners need to harmonize their actions for greater access to and utilization of technical information and financial resources available on the continent. Important information produced by countries and documented, for example in the Forestry Outlook Study for Africa (FOSA), could be used more effectively for regional and sub-regional strategic planning.
- AFWC may wish to consider organizing a specific African Forestry Week<sup>1</sup> in 2010, to increase the visibility of the forest sector; raise awareness about its important contribution to the protection of the environment and to economic and social development; to enhance effective regional cooperation in Africa; and to strengthen linkages between African and global forest dialogues of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), UNFF and other global fora.

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<sup>1</sup> Following the examples of the Asia-Pacific and European regions in 2008.