# THE FIRST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF FISNA (16-17 May 2007)



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## **Africa's Needs: Poverty Reduction**

- Technology: availability, adoption, productivity, quality
- Health: malaria & HIV pandemic, among others
- Market: poor access to domestic & international
- Governance: corruption, civil unrest, etc
- Institutions: weak service delivery
- Poor economic performance,
- High annual population growth
- Heavy debt burdens

#### Forestry's Role

- Household economy
  - Cash income
  - Subsistence
  - Input to farms and animal husbandry
  - Gap filling (safety net)
  - Asset (bargaining power)
- Economy wide benefits
  - Re-investment of forest rents ex-sector
  - Employment
  - Import substitution
  - Local indirect development effects

## **Primary Clients**

- Forest dwellers
  - Hunters and gatherers, shifting cultivators
- Forest fringe dwellers
  - Smallholders & the landless living adjacent forests
- Commercial users
  - Artisans, traders, small entrepreneurs
  - Forest industries
- Consumers of forest products and services
  - Urban poor

#### **Forest Products & Services**

- Timber
  - Round wood, lumber, pulp, etc
- Wood fuel
  - Fire wood, charcoal
- Non-Wood Forest Products
  - Food, fodder, honey, spices, medicine
  - Gums, resins, essential oils, pesticides, etc
- Services
  - Carbon sink, hydrological protection, soil amelioration
  - Eco-tourism, biodiversity

#### Forest Research's Role

- Technological options for higher, more efficient & better quality
  - production, harvesting, storage, protection,
  - Processing, marketing, etc
- Conservation and enhancement of the natural resource base
- Generate options for resource management, governance
- Generate solutions for constraints
- Inform policy

## The Challenge: Structure/Mandate

- Low political profile of the forestry sector
- Inadequate/absent forest policy, forest research policy
- Lack of autonomy
- Weak voice of the research community
- Arbitrary/frequent changes in structure
- Inadequate number of programs/projects
- Weak private sector client

# The Challenge: Staff

- Inadequate skills for most researchers
- Often, no critical mass
- Gender imbalance
- Disciplinary imbalance
- Poor incentive system
- Scientific isolation
- Low personal effectiveness of many researchers
- Inadequate support services (statistical, administrative, etc)
- Brain-drain, generation gap
- Low motivation of existing staff

# The Challenge: Resource

- Budget often doesn't match activities
- High annual variation in budget
- Inadequate basic facilities
  - Office, computers,
  - Communication infrastructure, etc
- Inadequate lab facilities
  - Equipment, supplies,
  - Maintenance of existing facilities
- Poor library/information services
  - Up-to-date literature,
  - internet search, etc)

## The Challenge: Procedures

- Inadequate strategic planning (agenda setting, prioritization)
- Poor monitoring and evaluation of on-going projects
- Bureaucratic red-tape
- Poor leadership/coaching
- Arbitrary/frequent changes in procedures

# The Challenge: Poor linkages with

- Policy making
- Industry
- Extension service
- Education
- National research partners
- Regional and international research
- Media

# The Challenge: Outputs/services

- Poor quality research
- Low publication rate
- Low research output
- Low research uptake
- Low research impact
- Duplication of effort
- Limited focus on policy and institutional issues
- Limited work on comparative study & research syntheses

# Our Response: Research grant (ongoing)

- Equipment
- Supplies (stationeries, lab, utilities, etc)
- Computers
- References, literature
- Field work (local travel, field assistants)
- Publishing
- Stipend/honoraria (under consideration)

# **Our Response: Training**

- Study grant (Msc, PhD, Post-doc) (under consideration)
- Short-term training
  - Research design (planned)
  - Data management, analyses, interpretation (planned)
  - Proposal writing (on-going)
  - Scientific paper writing (on-going)
  - Research management (planned)
  - Inter-disciplinary team management (planned)
  - Personal effectiveness (e.g., time management) (under consideration)

# Our Response: Networking

- Peer review mechanism (on-going)
- Promotion of research teams (on-going)
- Visiting research/attachments (planned)
- Mentoring, coaching, twining (planned)
- Collaborative research (on-going)
- Technical support (on-going)

#### Our Response: Miscellaneous

- Travel grant (on-going)
- Contract research (on-going)
  - Syntheses of lessons, addressing key research gaps
- Events (planned)
  - Thematic meetings (e.g., sub regional policy harmonizing)
  - Workshops and seminars
- Communication outreach
  - eNewsletters, eDiscussions, Online database (on-going)
  - ePublications (under consideration)
  - Internet access, literature search (under consideration)

# **AFORNET** background

- Functioned as CBFR 1991-1998
- Series of consultation up to 1999
- Launched in 1999 as AFORNET
- Sida support since 1991

#### **AFORNET Structure**

- Members' Forum
- Board the policy organ of the Network
- Technical Committee the technical arm of the Board
- Financial Committee the financial arm of the Board
- Secretariat implementation of day-to-day activities
  - a coordinator and scientific program officer
  - based at African Academy of Sciences Nairobi,
- Four Regional Nodes: nerve centres for scientists
  - East and North-Eastern Africa (at KEFRI)
  - Western and Central Africa (at FORIG)
  - Southern Africa (at SUA FFNC)
  - Sahelian Node

#### **Our Objectives**

- To nurture, develop and sustain multi-disciplinary research and multi-country driven research networks
- To promote regional co-operation in training and research
- To create appropriate avenues and mechanisms for sharing knowledge
- To sustain the forest information flow and access to scientific literature

#### **Our Activities**

- Young Scientists Program
- Thematic Research Program
- Short term training (proposal writing, data analysis and management, scientific writing, etc)
- Dissemination of relevant information (e.g. eNewsletter, Ebulletin, Electronic discussion etc)
- Commissioned research on vital research areas and gaps in the region
- Creating opportunities for collaboration

## Research Agenda for Africa

- Theme 1: Development of methods and tools for "best practice"
- Theme 2: Forestry contribution to poverty alleviation
- Theme 3: Forestry linkages to other sectors
- Theme 4: Socio-economic, policy and institutional analysis

# **Achievements: Young Scientist Program**

Period = 1991 - 2005

Total number of grantees = 216

• Female grantees = 37

Total number of countries =18

Journal articles =105

Conference proceedings =14

Manuscripts on preparation =89

# **Achievements: Thematic Research Program**

Period = 2000 - 2006

Total number of projects = 38

Total number of grantees = 221

• Female grantees = 22

Total number of countries = 21

Journal articles = 32

• Conference proceedings = 3

Manuscripts on preparation = 84

# **Achievements: Country Coverage - 25**

- West and Central Africa
  - Benin Burkina Faso Cote d'Ivoire Gambia Ghana ●
     Liberia Mali Mauritania Niger Nigeria Senegal Togo
  - Cameroon
- Eastern and North-Eastern Africa
  - Ethiopia → Kenya → Rwanda → Sudan → Uganda
- Southern Africa
  - Botswana Malawi Mozambique Namibia South Africa
  - Tanzania Zambia Zimbabwe

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