NFP Facility Side Event

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Participation: Political Rhetoric or Real Necessity?

Sudan Background Paper

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Real Situation

Sudan is the largest country in Africa with an area of one million square miles. Rainfall varies from zero mm/annum in the North to 1500 mm/annum in the South. Distribution of forests in Sudan varies according to the ecological zones and vegetation types. The ecological zones include: desert in the northern part which constitutes 25% of the total area of the country; semi desert 20%; low rainfall & high rainfall woodland savannah 45% (300 -1500 mm/annum); flood plain & montane vegetation. Forest types in Sudan include Federal Forests; State Forests, Private & Community Forests

The National Forest Programme Facility (nfp-Facility), hosted by FAO, provides support to the formulation and implementation of national forest programmes through creative partnerships between international and national actors interested in forestry related issues. It focuses on knowledge sharing and capacity development to ensure the informed participation of a broad range of stakeholders in nfp processes. Part of these activities is to promote in-country dialogue among all stakeholders, aiming at a common understanding of the nfp concept and its basic principles.

The main objective of the partnership established between Sudan’s Forests National Corporation (FNC) and nfp-Facility is to advance Sudan’s nfp process through revitalization thereof, informing and engaging of concerned stakeholders, opening of national debate on forestry, help integrate the nfp into the ongoing process of policy and legislation revision and help integrate the revised nfp into the National Development Vision (2003 – 2027) and subsequent Development Plans.

Through FAO nfp-Facility partnership, stakeholders who include; civil society organizations, Non Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, educational and research institutions and media organizations were supported to implement projects to address some aspects of these problems.

Activities carried out by NGOs and civil Society Organizations focused on awareness raising and involvement of local communities in environmental conservation, forest protection and tree planting initiatives. Educational and research institutions focused on studies and programmes related to forestry and allied fields.

Initiatives focused on; addressing local forestry problems in different regions for sustainable forest management; conducting studies on participatory approaches in forestry; building capacities of village committees and community based groups to play a role in nfp implementation; studies on role of civil society, NGOs and private sector in nfp formulation and implementation; conducting a national forestry sector review; linking national forest programmes and poverty reduction strategies; assessing the contribution of non-wood forest products to food security and poverty alleviation.
Forests National Corporation (FNC) is the Focal Point for nfp-Facility in Sudan. It is a parastatal service-oriented and independent body corporate; such independence marked the transition from a government department. As a self-financing entity, it has much more functional freedom to meet its recurring expenses. The FNC is empowered to exercise technical supervision over all forests throughout the country and entitled to issuing directives or take measures for protection and management of reserved and unreserved forests across the country. During the period since its establishment (1902 – 2009), FNC has been able to demonstrate its potential by setting up its structural, technical and financial systems.

Key stakeholders involved in the nfp-process included civil society organizations, NGOs, CBOs, namely Shambat Socio-cultural Foundation (El Neema); The Sudanese Environment Conservation Society; Babiker Badri Scientific Association for Women Studies; Umm Almomineen Charitable Organization; Sudanese Forestry Society; Sudanese Social Forestry Society; and Zaraga Organization for Rural Development.

Educational and research institutions included: Faculty of Forestry - University of Khartoum; University of Juba; Forestry Research Center and Sahel Center for Forestry Training. Media organizations involved in nfp included Teeba Press Foundation and White Nile Press Organization.

Civil society organizations play a great role among the local communities through awareness raising, capacity building, strengthening networking and linkages, women training and groups’ involvement.

Research centers and educational institutions contribute to nfp through: Addressing local forestry problems in the states for sustainable forest management in Sudan; Revising and updating the degree level of the forestry curricula; Capacity Building of village committees and community based groups to help them play a role in nfp-implementation; and conducting studies on participatory approach in Agroforestry, soil conservation, water management, biodiversity and desertification.

Media organizations role in the nfp process include; Raising public’s awareness and training journalists in issues related to forestry, forestry protection and forest rehabilitation; Undertaking advocacy campaigns to popularize forestry and raise awareness of reporters, journalists and the general public about Sudan’s National Forest Programme.

Experiences with stakeholder participation in the nfp process:
The following are the key stakeholders and a brief of their role in the nfp process in Sudan:

Forests National Corporation:
- Explaining the role of the Facility in support of the nfp in Sudan and motivate non-state stakeholders to apply for Facility grants.
- Completing the review of Sudan’s forestry sector and updating the status of Sudan’s national forest programme.

Sudanese Social Forestry Society:
- Documenting traditional knowledge of forest management and the traditional uses of forest products in South Kordufan State, and to build capacity and
increase involvement of stakeholders through dissemination of the documented knowledge.

**Teeba Press Corporation:**
- Undertaking an advocacy campaign to popularize forestry issues and raise awareness of reporters and journalists about Sudan’s National Forest Programme.

**Sudanese Environment Conservation Society:**
- Training staff in forest management and communication skills and to raise awareness of Sudanese rural communities of forestry’s significance for their sustainable livelihoods.

**Sudanese Forest Society**
- Supporting networking and information sharing of national forest programmes between foresters in research, education and development sectors.

**Faculty of Forestry, University of Khartoum:**
- Revising and updating the degree level of the forestry curriculum.
- A World Wide Web search was conducted focusing on forestry institutions and programmes that offer B. Sc. in Forestry. Sixty programmes were obtained, analyzed and synthesized using IUFRO classification criterion. International trends in forestry education were identified to serve as a guide in developing forestry curriculum. Existing curricula were evaluated and new ideas were gathered using participatory approach.

**University of Juba:**
- Training and capacity building of community-based organizations in two internally displaced people (IDP) camps in Khartoum state.

**White Nile Press:**
- Raising public’s awareness and training journalists in issues related to forestry, forestry protection and forest rehabilitation.

**Umm Almomineen Charitable Organization:**
- Raising awareness of the inhabitants of Sheikh El Amin Village on forests policies and legislation in support of their involvement in the management of their forests resources.
- Raising awareness and building the capacity of village communities and community based groups in selected villages of Sheikh Al Ameen in Khartoum, to help them play a role in the nfp implementation

**Babiker Badri Scientific Association for Women Studies:**
- Village women’s training and awareness raising in the field of environmental conservation, tree planting and benefits from forestry and non-wood forestry products in the area of Lower River Atbara, River Nile State of Sudan.

**Sudanese Environment Conservation Society:**
- Build the capacity of three local communities in River Rahad area (Gadaref State) through training and raising awareness in the areas of community management of the natural resources with special emphasis on forestry, nursery techniques, agroforestry and forest management

**The Sudanese Social Forestry Society:**
- Raising awareness of forestry stakeholders and the general public of the potential of social forestry, and to strengthen communication and linkages between concerned stakeholders
Zaraga Organization for Rural Development:-
- Identifying the roles of civil society, NGOs and the private sector in the national forest program and developing an action plan whereby the mentioned stakeholders are involved in the nfp implementation in the three areas: Wad Alnayyle, Abu Naama and Tangaro, Sennar state.

Forestry Research Center:-
- Raising stakeholder awareness and build management capacity of the Mesquite (Prosopis) tree in Khartoum, Gezira, Kassala, Red Sea and River Nile states.

Sahel Center for Forestry Training:-
- Strengthening networking and linkages between different Sudan nfp and forestry stakeholders and improving farmers’ administration and organization skills

Shambat Socio-cultural Foundation (El Neema):-
- Enhancing environmental awareness and training in simple techniques of tree planting and basic national forest program aspects in the Shambat Area, Khartoum North

Forestry Department of the Government of Southern Sudan
- Organizing and monitoring the Facility supported nfp activities in Southern Sudan
- Develop the draft Forestry Act for Southern Sudan.

Conclusions, recommendations and perspectives for the future:
The nfp-Facility programme in Sudan succeeded in involving a number of civil society organizations, NGOs research and educational institutions in the efforts exerted towards forestry protection and rehabilitation. The high level of awareness acquired by journalists and the media resulted in positive attitudes towards the forestry sector and environment.

A need was felt to study the participatory approaches in the different forestry activities and practices. It was apparent that informing and engaging concerned stakeholders is crucial and coordination between them is lacking. The success of these initiatives depends largely on building the capacities of local communities in forest resource conservation and management. Experiences revealed that it is not possible for the national forestry institutions to handle these issues without involving other stakeholders.

The activities carried out by stakeholders greatly contributed to the support of the national forest programme in Sudan. This is achieved by the involvement and motivation of stakeholders, opening of the national debate on forestry, integration of the nfp into the ongoing process of policy and legislation revision.

These activities have contributed to spark a change in attitude towards forestry at all levels of decision making and help to develop a consensus through a democratic process on how to address issues relevant to forests and trees at the national level.

Through field visits, workshops, training courses, dissemination of publications, media programmes and website the nfp-facility have played a positive role towards stakeholders’ involvement and participation.
Sudanese Forestry Society succeeded in attracting funds for rehabilitation projects that involved local communities in sand-dune stabilization in selected villages in White Nile State.

The nfp concept is in place, putting it into practice is a challenge and also means a risk to some stakeholders. Key stakeholders of the nfp process have had a common understanding on concepts, principles and elements of nfps.

Political commitment to forestry and environment is apparent from the ratification of all post-UNCED conventions and protocols, the Comprehensive National Strategy for Socio-economic Development 1992-2002, the systematic efforts for rehabilitation of natural resources, Forests and Renewable Natural Resources Act 2002 and the draft Forest Policy 2006.

Media Foundations, namely Teeba Press and White Nile Press succeeded in advocating for forestry and environmental issues specifically the issues of gum Arabic and decreasing forest cover due to illegal tree felling. These subjects were intensively covered by daily newspapers and remarkably contributed to formulation of the public opinion.

The activities contributed to change attitudes towards forestry at all levels of decision making and help to develop national consensus on how to address issues relevant to forests and trees.

One of the main achievements is the recent decision of the Council of Ministers on redemption of monopoly of gum Arabic commodity which is widely welcomed by gum Arabic producers and all concerned stakeholders.

Review of the Forestry Sector enabled stakeholders to participate through a series of meetings and workshops in exchange of information and formulating a framework for future action plans.

Revision of the forestry curriculum carried out by Faculty of Forestry, University of Khartoum, with involvement of concerned stakeholders contributed remarkably to updating and development of the curriculum.

Integration of nfp into the ongoing process of policy and legislation revision and subsequent development plans is required.

A study is needed to investigate the various parameters of NWFPs other than gums particularly their contribution to food security and poverty alleviation and eventually articulate the findings with Sudan’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

Supporting forestry extension and training programmes, involving the media, strengthening partnerships with private sector and NGOs and enhancing forestry development projects are some of the actions planned to improve and sustain the participation process in the country.