CONCEPT NOTE

Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World sub-regional dialogue for Francophone countries in Africa

Douala, Cameroon, 28-30 May 2019

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places sustainable use of natural resources, including forests, as a key tenet of the development vision. The Paris Agreement also highlights the contributions of forests to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as countries in drawing up their (intended) nationally determined contributions to mitigation mostly confirmed the prominent role of the forest sector. Harvested wood products’ can play a key role in strategies for transitioning to low-carbon economies thanks to technical and methodological progress that allows for better life-cycle monitoring. Concurrently, the impact of sustainable management of forests on enhancing livelihoods, contributing to sustainable rural and urban landscapes and reducing the world’s carbon and material footprints is gaining attention.

Despite the well-acknowledged benefits from forests to achieve the SDGs and climate change objectives, sustainable production and consumption of forest products, in particular wood products, have not often been given the right places it deserves in the international development agenda because of several reasons including those related to persistent unsustainable practices and negative reporting. This has contributed to low levels of finance and marketing for sustainable wood products. In this regard, there is a need for joint efforts to promote broad understanding on what sustainable forest values chains entail, where they can be found or created, what are the associated business models and how they can contribute to developmental goals at local, national and global levels.

In 2018, FAO together with the ACSFI, CIFOR, ITTO, the World Bank, and WWF launched the Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World Initiative (SW4SW) as a joint initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). The principal goal of this initiative is to strengthen sustainable wood value chains in order to enhance their social, economic and environmental benefits from production to consumption. Specifically, the initiative aims to enhance the contribution of sustainable wood value chains, for the more efficient achievement of SDGs and climate change objectives.

Building on the expertise and programme of work of each of the partner organizations, the SW4SW supports the formulation of policy frameworks and approaches, as well as market solutions, to strengthen sustainable wood value chains. This includes using smart incentives to foster sustainable wood sourcing, adopting inclusive business and investment models, facilitating the uptake of sustainable practices across various wood value chains, and promoting increased wood use for reducing material and carbon footprints. In summary, the SW4SW will translate
into meaningful benefits for all value chain actors and further increase the comparative and competitive advantages of sustainable wood products, with wider economic, social and climate benefits.

**Objectives**

Based on a renewable natural resource, forest value chains comprise a complex array of products and services and the activities of a network of actors. Developing forest value chains affects not only value added in terms of economic profitability and employment, but also the provision of ecosystem services and thus the present and future well-being of wide groups in society.

“Sustainable Wood for Sustainable World (SW4SW) Regional Dialogues for Africa” aims to raise awareness and build capacity on the contributions of sustainable wood value chains to sustainable development, based on a cross-sectoral approach that explore the linkages between sustainable rural and urban landscapes, the role of wood products and opportunities for finance. It will also identify regional priorities to strengthen wood value chains for the achievement of their economic, social and environmental sustainability, through the formulation of a preliminary roadmap. It is expected that these dialogues will enable cross-sectoral platforms for coordination at regional and national levels that can result in policies and measures, as well as increased finance, to sustainable wood value chains. It calls for a perspective beyond the land-based sectors, which better manages the linkages between rural and urban landscapes. At national level, this work can be associated with traditional instruments of forest governance, such as the national forest programmes, and other coordination platforms.

The first SW4SW dialogues in Africa will raise awareness, disseminate technical knowledge regarding SWVCs and sustainable wood products, approaches to increasing public and private finance for SWVC, and the contribution of SWVCs and wood products to the bioeconomy, enabling participants to discuss priorities and formulate a preliminary roadmap for achieving SW4SW objectives in the participants’ sub-regions. In this context, break-out groups following a geographic criteria will be established. For countries of the Congo Basin, the SW4SW dialogue will build on the outcomes of the FAO-WWF collaboration on the assessment of forest value chains in the Congo Basin. It is expected that by the end of the workshop aims of the SW4SW initiative are known and shared by stakeholders and SW4SW preliminary roadmaps are formulated with a view to future work to remove barriers to advance sustainable forest management and sustainable forest value chains.

**Meeting participants**

The meeting is planned for 100 participants, outreaching to a wide range of stakeholders including private sector, civil society, governments (including subnational), business associations,
professional associations, industry experts, communities. Some participants will be sponsored to ensure balanced representation.

The meeting aims to ensure representation of governmental representatives, non-governmental/civil society/community representatives (including women leadership) from the following countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo.

**Outputs**

- Awareness raised and capacity built on the contributions of sustainable wood value chains to sustainable development, based on a cross-sectoral approach that explore the linkages between sustainable rural and urban landscapes, the role of wood products and opportunities for climate finance; and
- Preliminary assessment of priorities and roadmaps to strengthen sustainable wood value chains.

**Venue and Date**

The Meeting will be held in Douala, Cameroon for three days (not including travel) from Tuesday to Thursday, 28th to 30th May 2019.

**Preparation**

Each country is expected to prepare for the various agenda items included in the meeting. A brief outline of these expected preparations, along with general logistical information, will be provided in an Information Note to be circulated upon confirmation of selected participants.

All participants are encouraged to bring along relevant publications, case studies, awareness raising and training materials and other relevant documentation for sharing at the regional meeting.

Participation of women is strongly encouraged.