

**Statement by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources- Prof. James Kiyiapi Head of Kenyan Delegation, FAO Conference  
17<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

**Side High Level Meeting on Forests and Energy**

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Kenyan Government I take this opportunity to applaud the FAO Director General and Secretariat for hosting this high level meeting on Forests and Energy. Kenyan forests play a vital role in the livelihood of the Kenyan population through provision of forest related products, goods and services.

**Forests and Energy**

- The provision of adequate and secure sources of energy in its various forms is essential for a nation's growth and economic development. With increasing globalization of the world's economy, the availability and the effective use of energy has a critical role in any country's progress towards sustainable development. Rural areas of Kenya are almost wholly dependent on biomass as the primary source of energy while urban development and hydro energy rely heavily on water whose source is the forest.
- Kenya is largely a forest scarce country with closed canopy forests constituting only 2-3% of the total land area. Most of the woody resources are scattered in mosaic of over the extensive arid and semi-arid landscapes (forming over 80% of the land area) and farmland.

**Challenges**

Forestry management challenges revolved around a tight nexus of population-energy and rampant poverty manifested in high demand for forest products and services on already dwindling forest resources leading to over exploitation and subsequent environmental degradation.

- High incidences of poverty, which militates against long term household investment in commercial tree growing.

**Reforms on Forestry Sector**

The forest sector reforms in Kenya has seen the review of forest policy and the enactment of a new Forests Act (2005) that embraces guiding principles for sustainable forest management and use of planted forests.

- The new legislation ensures good governance by providing for devolution of decision making process in the forestry sector whereby the private sector and the communities have an opportunity to make decisions on matters affecting their forests. In this regard models of community participation must be elaborated
- The new legal framework gives emphasis to expansion of wood resources in farmland. In fact, Kenya is one success story in which currently 80% of the woody biomass is found in non-gazetted forests, in farmland. We think that this represents the frontier for woody biomass expansion in face of high stiff competition for land.

- The country has also embarked on an aggressive programme of plantation development involving private sector – this includes exploring potentials for fast growing species in arid and semi-arid areas. *Jatropha curcas* is a good example.
- Recognizing the high dependence of the population on wood, Kenya is developing regulations and rules to guide sustainable charcoal production and use. This is largely unregulated sector worth over Kshs 34 billion!
- Overall, there is a need to develop a national policy on biofuels

### **FAO support to forestry activities**

Kenya appreciates the technical and financial assistance offered to the forestry sector by FAO, which is currently supporting several projects which include Net work for Gums and Resins, a project based in the Arid and Semi-arid areas, Management of *Prosopis* tree species, also in Arid and Semi-arid areas among other projects. FAO has also been supportive in the on going forestry reform process in Kenya.

Kenya continues to value the support of FAO in formulation of policy on biofuels and carbon sequestration issues, capacity building and in enhancement of synergy through coordinated research and promotion of national, regional and international cooperation for technology transfer.

In conclusions we need to focus on:

1. Need for tools for integrated NR assessment and management linked to rural livelihoods
2. Link energy issues and forestry programs to local level community based natural resource management and sustainable land management
3. Elaborate effective local institutions taking into account principles of resource tenure, equity and governance
4. Need to conduct research and develop protocols to improve energy efficiencies in the use of biofuels

THANK YOU!