

Remarks by Oscar Simanto, Head Forest Extension Management, Kenya Forest Service during the official closing of the first African Farm Forestry Producer Organizations Conference, Nairobi

- Ladies and gentlemen, Kenya through the Kenya Forest Service is greatly honoured to have hosted the first Pan African Farm Forestry Producer Organizations conference here at Laico Regency Hotel, Nairobi.
- Kenya Forest Service is a state agency mandated by law to sustainably manage all forestry and allied resources for the socioeconomic development of Kenyans
- The Kenyan Constitution mandates all Citizens to set aside at least 10% of their total land areas for tree growing. This constitutional clause has greatly profiled tree growing and hence farm forestry development in Kenya
- Currently, Kenya is reviewing its forestry policy and law in order to make it more proactive towards the development of farm forestry sector and farmers enterprise groups
- The new policy will be geared towards transforming landscapes and livelihoods of small farm forestry producers and their emerging organizations
- From the discussions and field visits during the conference, we saw both opportunities and challenges which should be exploited and addressed respectively in order to develop and move forward the farm forestry sector in the continent.
- The challenges discussed during the workshop are not only unique to Kenya, but all African countries
- In respect to farm forestry development, Africa has numerous opportunities to advance this agenda by organizing farmers into effective groups geared at improving marketing of farm forestry products
- Africa should therefore seize this opportunity and create an enabling policy and legal environment for the advancement of farm forestry in the continent.
- The world forestry congress to be held in Durban, South Africa in September 2015 presents yet another opportunity for Africa to alert the world of the emerging small farm forestry sector in the continent and the opportunities it presents to address rural poverty, create employment for youths and women and improve household incomes for millions of land owners in the continent
- Farm Forestry development is therefore a sure pathway towards the achievement of the goals stipulated in the African Union Agenda 2063 for sustainable forest management by all Countries in the continent.
- In moving the farm forestry agenda forward, African Countries should bring on board the private sector to actively invest in this emerging nascent small holder farm forestry producer organizations sector in the Continent
- Once again Kenya Forest Service is greatly honoured to have participated in organizing this conference as a member of the organizing committee. Thank you very much for your active participation during the conference